



# BIGFOOT OF THE BLUES

by Vance Orchard

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## CAN YOU DEFINE REALITY?

Responding to skeptics of the Bigfoot story seems to go hand in hand with telling about the subject.

It becomes a stickler matter when you try to tell a skeptic that you have just witnessed a Bigfoot.

To what is the skeptic responding?

Is he grasping at a piece of the sinking raft for something solid in order that his own world of reality be reserved?

Or, as several have pointed out to me, does he attempt to refute the Bigfoot matter because he really knows nothing about the subject so can speak of it with the most authority?

I ran across some interesting thoughts on this matter in the reading of "Do Not Test Us,"\* a fascinating, can't-put-it-down kind of book about one man's ventures into the world of the psychic phenomena. Dick Walker of Portland, Ore., the author, struck me as an ordinary "Joe," one to whom I could readily relate.

In his book, Walker relates an incident wherein a boy in Fiji performed something highly unbelievable, a transformation of the boy, while seemingly in a catatonic trance, into a giant of a man who claimed he was from an era 600 years in the past!

Walker relates how the witness to this event, a doctor and Nobel prize nominee, was highly ridiculed by some of his peers when he later told of the incident.

Comments such as: "Come, come, you don't expect us to believe this tripe" were among the mildest.

So, to extricate himself, the doctor told his listeners that they had apparently forgotten a facet of human behavior: "the tendency to reject the strange and unexpected, even when evidence confronts your own eyes."

Then, he went on to tell of an experiment at a university where some students were dressed as really weird apparitions and sent out on the campus late at night when it was certain they'd meet some professors.

None of the professors acted as if they'd seen anything unusual! "Perhaps they simply rejected mentally the sight of what they met, since this was an inordinate departure from what is generally accepted as normal," observed the doctor.

What the doctor then said is offered here because I feel it applies equally well to the Bigfoot phenomena and very possibly to the UFO matter as well.

Here are the three paragraphs from Dick Walker's book, quoting the witness to the Fiji experience:

"Remember this, gentlemen, man is subject to over 10,000 impressions every second, on every level of his responsiveness. If he had to be consciously aware of each of these impressions, he would be totally disoriented and unable to function. Thus, we learn to single out, and respond to, only those impressions which fit the accepted version of reality which we have learned. Whenever a deviation occurs, and if the deviation is not too

extreme, we will account for it within this accepted version, which is for us the norm. When a completely alien deviation comes along, it threatens our very sanity, so we reject it. Any changes, even small ones, in what we accept as reality have to be introduced gradually, if they are to fit into this accepted reality.

"Well, gentlemen, the phenomenon which I personally witnessed, and which I have just described to you, violates all that is accepted in our current version of reality. Therefore you are inclined to ridicule it at once, without giving it even a cursory examination. Then you turn your backs and mutter that it's obviously an illusion. This is because you can't define it as verifiable reality, with your current concepts of science. What I experienced (the Fiji boy's transformation) was no illusion, I assure you, and I was not hallucinating.

"I myself wanted at first to excuse my own skepticism by saying that the human personality has definite limitations. Then, somewhere deep inside me, a voice commanded me to believe that the human personality has NO limitations except those which it accepts, and that the impossible, and the highly unlikely, because of an amazingly explosive technology, have already moved into the realm of the possible.

"And that, gentlemen, is where I stand on this matter. I rest my case."

The doctor then added:

"Nobody said anything at first. Then one of the men, who had been unequivocally critical and singularly vituperative, said in a very small voice:

'Harry, do you have a couple of aspirin?' "

---

I am certain readers of the ages which follow will need no aspirin to assist them in the perusal. I do think that recalling these words you've just read will be of help as you read those words which follow.

But, whatever ... enjoy, enjoy, enjoy!

— Vance Orchard

Walla Walla, Washington 99362

1993

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(\*) WALKER, DICK. "Do Not Test Us, One Man's Ventures into the Psychic World." Portland: Binford & Mort, Thomas Binford, Publisher, 1978.



## CHAPTER 1

BY VANCE ORCHARD

For 32 years the outdoors reporter for the  
Walla Walla, Wash. "Union-Bulletin."

— — — — —

"I know what I saw ...

"And, I'm not going to change, because that's what I saw."

Paul Freeman — Mill Creek Watershed patrol rider who claims to have seen a huge, hairy, manlike creature on his rounds Thursday — said the creature was unlike anything he had seen in a lifetime of woods experience.

"But, it isn't a robot, that's certain — whatever it is. I could see the muscles in his legs move when he walked. I could see the muscles in its arms and shoulders. It just plain scared me, and I've never been scared in the woods before. "This thing was real. It was big enough to tear the head right off your shoulders if it wanted to."

Freeman's reference to a robot concerned a story in Sunday's Union-Bulletin that quoted Jon-Erik Beckjord, director of an organization known as Project Big Foot. Beckjord, of Seattle, suggested the creature Freeman saw could have been a robot

weighing some 4,000 pounds. Reacting to the story, Freeman said: "This is crazy. No way does it (the creature) have that kind of weight. It would have to be made of solid lead to weigh that much. It might weigh 750 to 850 pounds, not over that."

Freeman, who says he has "hunted and trapped all my life, "came to the Walla Walla Valley a year ago from Camas, Wash., near Mt. St. Helens, an area where many Bigfoot sightings have been reported in years past.

"I never saw anything like this in that area," Freeman says. "I never believed in 'em for that matter ... figured there wasn't any such thing. I was a complete atheist on the subject. "Today, Freeman is a believer.

"I saw something Thursday ... it wasn't an animal, either."

Could it have been a bear?"

"No, I see bears all the time in the watershed. I just stand still, and they walk off."

Shown a 1967 photograph of a Bigfoot captured on film in California by the late Roger Patterson, Freeman noted similarities to what he claims to have seen at the top of the Tiger Canyon Road in the Blue Mountains a few miles south of Walla Walla.

"It had a high crown on its head — like this one in the picture — the face was more open. Its palms were light-colored." Freeman says the creature was covered with reddish-black or brownish hair except for the face, the palms of its hands and the soles of its feet. While the creature uttered no sounds, Freeman says he could easily hear the sounds of its footsteps.

"It was real ...

"I thought it was going to come at me when I first saw it coming down the bank because the hair on its neck and head just went forward like the hair will on a dog's back ... did it three times, then it just turned and started walking down the road, looking back at me once in a while.

"There's no way a person could put a suit on and make that kind of stride (the huge prints were spaced some 64 inches apart — like that creature made. I tried it and the best I could do was four feet."

Freeman doesn't carry a weapon on his horseback patrol duty, but after last Thursday's experience, he admits he'd like to be able to carry a gun.

"I kind of get an eerie feeling when I go back up there now," he says.

Would he have used a gun when he encountered the creature last Thursday morning?

"If I had had a gun with me at the time it stopped and riffled its hair two or three times," Freeman says, "I'd probably have shot it. But, after it turned and started walking away from me, I wouldn't have. I could tell right then it wasn't going to harm me. It just wanted to get away."

First reports of the creature were that it was about nine feet tall. Freeman now says he doesn't think it was that big.

"But it's taller than the (eight foot) ceiling here."

Freeman's life — and that of his family — has not been the same since he excitedly phoned the news of his encounter to the Walla Walla office of the U.S. Forest Service.

"People have been calling me up at home — and

the phone is unlisted — and telling me I'm crazy and even calling my kids names and so forth."

Gary Flanik, Walla Walla District ranger for the Umatilla National Forest, said the forest service office here "has been completely inundated ... we don't know how to handle this sort of thing. It's at the point where Paul (Freeman) and Wayne (Long) have no privacy." Long, the district's fire control officer, has been assigned to head an investigation of the sighting. Flanik said his office probably would be forced to issue daily or regular bulletins. "We aren't getting much done around here except this."

Freeman says he wishes he had carried a camera at the time of the encounter.

"I'm going to get one now."

But, the watershed rider isn't sure if he'll ever see the creature again.

"From the stride it had as it walked away, it likely was way over into the Wenaha-Tucannon Wilderness Area by nightfall. It was just walking at a fast pace and about every third step, it would look back over its shoulder at me.

"I could see it real good ... it was a big creature."

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— *(This page 1 article under my byline appeared in the Walla Walla Union-Bulletin June 15, 1982, from an interview with Paul Freeman at the Walla Walla Ranger Office of the Umatilla National Forest, Monday morning following the June 10, 1982, sighting by Freeman).*

What Paul Freeman told me in the above interview has continued to be his staunch belief since the day

he came across a Bigfoot and reported it to his Forest Service superiors at Walla Walla.

He says today that in light of what happened to his life and his family since that day he probably would NOT have reported what he saw.

Scorn, ridicule toward him and his family, including much taunting of his children in schools, made Freeman determined to prove that he truly had seen one of the Bigfoot monsters. It is determination which has driven him, despite a crippling foot injury and probably decreased income, to pursue a dogged search for 10 years. It was a search he made with a high-powered rifle cradled on an arm at first, convinced that only bringing in a dead-or-alive specimen would get the job done. He has since done an about face and for the past few years he takes along only a TV camcorder.

To tell the story of this man's search is part of the reason I have put together this, my first attempt at an electronic book, "The Bigfoot of the Blues." It is at once the story of the creature reported so many times by so many here and elsewhere in the Northwest. It is a highly interesting and intriguing subject. Testimony to that is the time given it on such television shows as "Unsolved Mysteries" and the popular family movie, "Harry and the Hendersons."

My story will have as its primary scope, however, the fascinating account of what may be the most popular haven for this elusive creature: the Walla Walla section of the Blue Mountains of Oregon and Washington.

For, here has been found ample evidence of there

being not one Bigfoot, but several!

And, while the sighting by Paul Freeman in 1982 gave this area nation-wide exposure, this was not the first sighting of Bigfoot, his huge footprints (and handprints, too!) and other evidence of an unusual animal. It was not the first sighting in the Walla Walla Blues.

Not by a long shot!

We have accounts of close encounters back to 1900 in this region.

And, Indian lore of the region tells of the animal's presence for hundreds of years before that.

We have accounts of the creature which offer the theory of a connection with UFOs!

There are even beliefs and experiences which go beyond that.

\*\* \*\* \*

Turning to the material (mostly in the form of newspaper clippings I have saved over the years of my own stories or those of other reporters as well as interviews with persons involved, I will bring you this most fascinating story of the Bigfoot Saga.

While my Bigfoot report goes far beyond the Blue Mountains and the 1982 Freeman sighting, it WAS that sighting in the Blues that was the springboard for my story. I will describe what transpired that summer of '82 and the opening months of the 10-year search begun that year by Paul Freeman. The full story (to registered buyers) will detail the fascinating sightings of tracks and Bigfoots in the latter years of the 1982-92 decade.

But first, allow me to digress in order that you may

better understand the terrain — get the lay of the land, so to speak — and to meet the people who have been so involved since (and before) 1982. First, the lay of the land, like, “Where in the world is Walla Walla and the Blue Mountains?”

Walla Walla, a city of 26,000, got its start with the end of the 1855-58 Indian wars of Old Oregon Territory, then boomed as a frontier supply town for the goldfields of Idaho, Oregon and Montana from 1860-1880. It is located in the Southeastern part of Washington State, only six miles from the Oregon line. It is situated in the bountiful Walla Walla Valley close to the foothills of the north end of the Blue Mountains. Its world-renowned “Walla Walla Sweet Onions” are a prime crop, but others include wheat, peas, alfalfa seed and various fruit crops. The Blue Mountains run diagonally from SE Washington through Eastern Oregon. While not known for its high elevations (7,000 feet tops) this ancient range is best known for its thick stands of timber and deep canyons and super elk hunting! Straddling the Oregon-Washington line is a 176,000-acre watershed, set aside by the federal government in 1918 for water supply for the City of Walla Walla. Humans and their livestock are kept out, except for a short special permit hunting season in the fall. In 1978 the Wenaha-Tucannon Wilderness Area was created on several thousand acres adjacent to the watershed and stretching some 25 air miles easterly in the top half of the Umatilla National Forest. With restricted usage by humans (because of its Wilderness status) this total area represents a huge potential Bigfoot residence seldom visited in any numbers by people.

Here are some of the people you'll be meeting in my story:

**PAUL FREEMAN** — A giant of a man, Freeman stands some six foot, five inches and weighs 300 pounds or more. A woodsman all his life, he was raised in the John Day, Oregon, region and elsewhere in the Northwest. He was no stranger to the dense forests and deep canyons of the Blue Mountains when he hired on with the U.S. Forest Service out of Walla Walla. His job? Riding patrol to keep humans and their livestock out of the Mill Creek Watershed, source of water for Walla Walla. It was while on routine patrol June 10, 1982, that Freeman, rounding a bend in an abandoned logging road, came face to face with an 8-foot Bigfoot. Freeman who had been, in his own words, "a complete atheist" on the subject, instantly became a believer but his life was not the same from that moment on. Our story will unravel much of that in the pages to follow.

**WES SUMERLIN** — A man who has spent most of his life in the Blue Mountains — as a packer and tracker of lost people — Wes also spent his youth on an Indian reservation where he was taught the ancient tracking and survival secrets of his kin. He and his brother, "Swede" Sumerlin, are both part Indian and each has spent many years trapping and tracking wildlife and mankind in the Blues. Swede, too, has a role in the story ahead.

**GROVER KRANTZ** — Professor of anthropology, Washington State University, Pullman, Wash., Krantz is one of the very first (and one of few) scientists who acknowledge (or even will talk about) the presence of a Bigfoot. It is his studied opinion that Bigfoot is



not human, a belief not likely to be proven (or disproven) until a live specimen is found.

**DAVID BEEN** — A Walla Walla contractor, Been comes to the Blue Mountains from his native Arkansas, where he was "raised in the woods and everyone knew how to track, even a squirrel, no matter where it went." Been is considered an excellent tracker by his Bigfoot aficionados.

**ROGER THORNTON** — A Bigfoot enthusiast for many years and member of more than one Bigfoot expedition, Thornton brought his knowledge of the creature and his tracking and outdoors knowledge with him when he came to Waitsburg (20 miles east of Walla Walla) a few years ago. His expertise in the subject as well as the outdoors have been assets in the search for Bigfoot of the Blues.

**PHIL FARNES** — Another who has spent much of his life in the outdoors (employed by the Soil Conservation Service in Montana) he became involved in the Blue Mountains Bigfoot when his family in Walla Walla reported the "miles of Bigfoot tracks" seen here in 1991. He is also a recognized outdoors photographer.

**GREG MAY** — Instructor of outdoors survival skills at Washington State University, May is a graduate of the Tom Brown Survival School of New Jersey. These skills and sophisticated electronic devices were brought into play here by him in the 1991 sightings of tracks, which descended from the mountains to a point only seven miles east of Walla Walla.

**JON-ERIK BECKJORD** — One who has long been interested in the Bigfoot phenomena, he has also become involved in research into other

anomalies, such as the Loch Ness monster, and is currently operating a unique museum of "beasties" at Malibu, Calif. He was on the scene at the time of the 1982 Freeman sighting and was the first to assign the Bigfoot to a world other than ours. His comments have proven highly controversial — as well as highly interesting.

**JIM HEWKIN** — A retired biologist with the Oregon Department of Fish and Game, Hewkin (of St. Helens, Ore.) has had an interest in Bigfoot for several years and has spent a lot of time investigating reports in Oregon's Cascade Mountains as well as the Blues.

**ROGER PATTERSON** — The man who filmed a moving Bigfoot in 1967. He has since died but his partner that day, Bob Gimlin, is still living in Yakima, Wash., and recalls with vividness that day when the only action photography of a Bigfoot was captured on film.

**VANCE ORCHARD** — The author of this book, has written about the Walla Walla Country — the Blue Mountains from stem to stern and top to bottom — since 1951, first for the Walla Walla "Union-Bulletin" and since 1990 for the Waitsburg, Wash., "Times." No subject covered in that region and that time span has been of more interest than the Bigfoot story. I have been quite close to the Blues Bigfoot story since 1966 when I did my first news item about a man's sighting of "awful big tracks like a man's" while riding a motorcycle up the Mill Creek Road. That started it and I have been "hooked" on Bigfoot ever since, collecting an apple box full of clippings and photographs and a sizable shelf of books and films on the subject. Following the trail

(and trials) of Bigfoot sighting (1982) Paul Freeman during that decade and especially the past two years has been easily the most intriguing story I've ever written about. I think you'll agree when you get the full story I'm putting together here.

## CHAPTER 2

Oh, there were doubters, but a lot of other people agreed with Paul Freeman when he reported he'd seen a Bigfoot on his rounds as a Forest Service watershed patrol rider.

This was the theme in a column I wrote for the Walla Walla "Union-Bulletin" June 20, 1982, a few days after Freeman reported his sighting. Here's what I wrote:

Paul Freeman, spotter of a "huge, hairy, manlike creature" as he made his Mill Creek Watershed patrol rounds, is not alone in his conviction he saw the legendary "Bigfoot" or "Sasquatch."

("Sasquatch" is the name given the animal by British Columbia Indians).

Freeman drew a lot of support locally and has drawn more as the story spread around the Northwest and the world by way of Associated Press and other news broadcasting media.

And, Freeman and his family have drawn a lot of attention since he sighted the creature on an old logging road on the edge of the watershed near the top of the Tiger Canyon Road —about eight miles from Mill Creek.

An interview by the New York correspondent of the London Times was "pretty exciting," according

to Nancy Freeman. And, it was only one of several interviews Freeman has done since the morning of June 10.

Freeman, an acknowledged skeptic on the subject, became an overnight believer when he saw the creature. So have some others who have become involved in the sighting.

And, involved right from the start were Milton-Freewater (Oregon) members of the Umatilla County Sheriff's Search and Rescue Team. The team, headed by Art Snow and Ray Ralph, went to the site (just over the Washington-Oregon line in Oregon) when the Forest Service investigators reported "a strong odor" in the area.

The team went there because it was felt the body of Keith Zumke might have been located. The mentally retarded man had last been seen late in October only a short distance from the location of the reported sighting of the creature, Snow noted.

Other members of the team included Mary Ralph and two Explorer Scout members, Dave Stephens and his sister, Jackie.

After spending several hours on the scene — and before the tracks had become obliterated by hundreds of curiosity seekers over the weekend — the search-rescue team left convinced Freeman had indeed seen something unusual to the Blue Mountains.

"We have no reason in the world to doubt Paul Freeman's story," says Snow. "In fact, we couldn't think of any way he could possibly have faked it.

"We saw no evidence that we could dispute him."

Ralph concurred with Snow.

"I have to believe the thing (Bigfoot) is real now, after seeing the prints and the area, but I was a non-believer before."

The intense odor reported by Freeman in his report of the sighting might have been that which Forest Service investigators smelled and reported, Snow suggests.

The search-rescue team — experts in the business of tracking — investigated both ends of the area in which 25 huge footprints had been found on the roadway, Snow says.

Going the other way — down the road as the Bigfoot walked away from Freeman — resulted in the same thing as the tracks disappeared into a hard surface on the roadway, he says.

The team had no dogs with them, but this wouldn't have helped, Snow says. "A hound needs an article of clothing, a piece of hair or something to get the scent, otherwise, he doesn't know what he's tracking."

From observations and tests at the scene, Snow has developed some interesting conjecture concerning the tracks. His estimate is that the creature weighed between 650 and 700 pounds.

"To make those tracks we saw going down that road, you'd have to put 650 vertical pounds of pressure on the ground to make them in the soil as we found it.

"Now, how do you move 650 pounds of weight down the road and make those tracks and only have those tracks showing?

"You could do it with a helicopter, but no other

way.

"Stilts? It would take a heckuva guy to do that."

=====

OTHERS CHECK IN — Since the report by Freeman, others have come forth to declare belief in the phenomenon or to report sightings here and in the Northwest.

Wayne Long, Forest Service staffer here in charge of the investigation, reported a woman had called his office to report she had seen the same creature in the same vicinity in 1968-69.

One of the most interesting callers was the woman who saw the AP story in Boise, Idaho, then phoned to report her two sons had seen a Bigfoot two years ago while camping in the Sawtooth Mountains northeast of Boise.

One of the sons, Clint Smith, 18, got on the phone to describe the creature which loomed in front of his van as the brothers were seeking a camping spot in the darkness before dawn.

"It walked out in the middle of the road in front of our van and stared at us. It was eight feet or more with brown hair with a reddish tint. It turned as we got within about 15 feet of it, stared at us, then suddenly shot down the road and out of sight.

"Tell Freeman he's not the only one who believes in Bigfoot. We saw one too."

=====

When Freeman and his patrol rider companion, Bill Epoch, a week later found more Bigfoot tracks, this time just inside the watershed, a report was again filed.

This time a professional tracker was hired by the

Forest Service, by name of Joel Hardin. When Hardin called the tracks hoaxed affairs, the Forest Service closed the book on the Bigfoot issue.

This despite strong challenging by Freeman and others.

A Bigfoot researcher even went so far as to suggest "whitewashing" of the whole matter by the Forest Service, a challenge never acknowledged, as far as I know.

Some who worked closely with Freeman also felt the patrol rider saw something, recalling how Freeman, four hours after his encounter was still "shaky" over the meeting.

=====

Plaster casts of the Bigfoot's footprints have been gathered by the thousands over many years over most of the Northwest. Those gathered here haven't drawn any more credulity than the rest ... until recently.

Now, after examining several casts made at the time of Freeman's sighting of Bigfoot in Tiger Saddle, as well as casts made of prints found inside the watershed, an anthropologist said in 1982 that these might be different.

Grover Krantz, Washington State University anthropologist who was the first such scientist to express belief in the manlike monsters, called the Freeman sighting "of good quality."

But, it is the footprints which caught Krantz' attention in this incident.

"I've always found footprints more convincing than somebody's verbal account of a sighting," he said then.

Why are the Mill Creek Watershed footprints so significant?

Krantz again was conservative in his reply, but said two casts are of the left foot which have differences in the toe positions, which he termed "a very important feature."

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About a month after the Bigfoot sighting by Paul Freeman, the Bigfoot issue got hot again. It started with the finding of many huge tracks by some fishermen in the depths of the Wenaha-Tucannon Wilderness Area. This is a Blue Mountains zone not ventured into by many. The following account is from my outdoors column in the Walla Walla "Union-Bulletin," telling of an experience in July, 1982, of a fishing party.

— — —

Six men who packed into the Wenaha-Tucannon Wilderness Area late in July on a fishing trip, caught more than a mess of trout.

They caught "Bigfoot fever" in a big way.

Their account which follows will be an updating of the Blue Mountains Bigfoot affair. This matter started early in June with the reported sighting of the creature.

Freeman reported what he'd seen to his superiors and his life hasn't been the same since.

He says he quit his job with the U. S. Forest Service because of the flak he took about the Bigfoot sighting. He moved from Milton-Freewater (Ore.) to Athena (Ore.) and has since returned to Camas (Wash.), from whence he and his wife, Nancy, and children had come when he took the



forest service job.

But, Freeman has not given up on eventually finding a Bigfoot, if only to vindicate that he had truly seen the monster.

Finding a Bigfoot is a vow Freeman made to himself when he got all the flak. Seeking to fulfill it, he made more than one trip into the Blues before he left Athena. What he — and others — found add much to this updating.

One such trip came in late July when Freeman's boss, Allen Mitchell of Athena, mentioned a fishing trip he and some others had planned into the Wenaha country. Freeman was invited to come along.

Besides Mitchell and Freeman, the rest of the party consisted of Russ and Mike Evans, Andy Ely and Rodney Bonifer. All live in the Adams-Athena area. All have spent time in the Wenaha country and Mitchell says he has hunted and fished there for more than 25 years.

Unloading their horses at Timothy Meadow, the party rode down the South Fork Wenaha River to make camp near the mouth of Milk Creek, a favorite camping place of hunters and anglers.

Mitchell struck off downstream to do some fishing before it got too dark.

On his return to camp, he found the others buzzing about seeing big footprints and that Freeman had made some plaster of paris casts.

"I just said 'Yeah ... okay' and went off to bed," Mitchell says of the incident. "I've never been concerned with that Bigfoot stuff in the past."

The next morning, Mitchell and Mike Evans

saddled up and took a ride toward Shoofly Creek. About a mile from camp Mitchell became a Bigfoot believer, he says.

He and Evans came upon scores of big footprints — three different sizes in the lot — that he swears could not have been faked.

"Absolutely no way possible," he says.

"Don't disturb anything," Mitchell advised Evans. "Freeman hasn't been up here yet."

A big man, it required three of Mitchell's steps to stretch from one of the big footprints to the other, he says.

"As near as I could figure, the Bigfoot would have to be right at six feet high at the crotch and would have to weigh around 1,200 pounds to sink into the mud as deep as those prints were," Mitchell says. "My horse weighs around 1,200 pounds and I walked him through the mud and he didn't sink as deep as those feet did.

"Nobody could have faked those prints."

Mitchell and Evans tied up their horses and followed the big tracks.

"We found tracks all over the place for a quarter mile, including three different sets, and one was a cripple-footed one, just like Freeman had made a cast of back at camp," Mitchell says.

Mitchell figures the three creatures were in the bottom of the canyon (of the Wenaha) when the party of six men rode in and the three "spooked" and headed up into the rugged Shoofly Creek region.

The men weren't too far way from the manlike creatures, he says. Patches of melonweed were

trampled and rolled in and looked like something had just done it before they got there, he says.

Mitchell took pictures of the prints and Freeman has casts of the three different tracks found on the Wenaha.

As to publicity about his find on Shoofly Creek, Mitchell said he didn't "care what you put in the paper nobody is going to prove I didn't see the tracks. I have proof the tracks are there.

"Print what you want, but that's the truth."

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Yes, the Bigfoot of the Blue Mountains was a hot subject that summer of '82 and all the best known people who had anything to do with Bigfoots, Sasquatches or Yetis got a look at the scene here and some of the action, too.

The meager role of the scientist even got a look and some commentary. My "Union-Bulletin" outdoors column for July 4, 1982, was a good case in point. While the skeptics have had a field day with the Bigfoot matter, a lot of people regard it with seriousness.

Joining a host of such "believers" is an increasing number of anthropologists who have replied to a challenge issued in 1970 by a leading figure in the Bigfoot/Sasquatch story.

The challenger was John Green, a former publisher of a weekly newspaper at a tiny town in central British Columbia, who has departed the publishing field to devote full time to the Bigfoot thing. Following his first book, "On the Track of the Sasquatch," Green took anthropologists to task for not gathering up the material concerning the

matter.

This challenge came on the heels of Green's second book about Bigfoot, "Year of the Sasquatch," in which he reviews, "literally hundreds, if not thousands, of recorded footprints of some unknown creature in situations where they could not have been made by pranksters, machinery or known animals," says Roderick Sprague, director of the laboratory of anthropology, University of Idaho.

As a result of Green's challenge, and the invitation of Sprague, editor of Northwest Anthropological Research Notes, for scientists to reply, several articles appeared and have been published as a collection.

The collection, first published as a book of seven articles, was put together by Sprague and Grover S. Krantz, professor of anthropology at Washington State University. The second edition, published in 1979, contains three more articles.

More articles are sought, Sprague notes. "We welcome any reasonably scientific paper dealing with the Sasquatch phenomenon. We are not suggesting the acceptance or rejection of belief in the Sasquatch, but rather, the unfettered anthropological study of such beliefs, either positive or negative."

When reports began circulating about the Bigfoot sighting near the boundary of the Mill Creek Watershed by patrol rider Paul Freeman, Sprague sent me a copy of the book, "The Scientist Looks at the Sasquatch II."

For those who want to gain serious insight into the subject, I recommend a reading of this book,

not only for its fascinating articles telling the history of the Sasquatch in a short book, but for the many reference books cited. If you get hooked on the subject, there is ample source material to go further.

At the outset, Krantz, one of the first anthropologists to state his belief that the Sasquatch exists, has very interesting commentary, not the least of which are his own views:

"The Sasquatch is not human, it is probably *Gigantopithecus* and its reality can be established only with an actual specimen.

Krantz goes on from there to point out that the articles have been "written by scholars, mostly anthropologists, who are able to bring considerable expertise to bear on the matter. While only three of the eight authors—himself, Gordon Strassenburgh and Dmitri Bayonov (a Russian scientist) — are satisfied that the Sasquatch is in fact a living animal species, the others profess at least to have open minds as to its reality. All agree that it is a valid field of inquiry and ought not to be ignored as has generally been done in the past. Perhaps the appearance of this volume will stimulate others with pertinent information to offer it a wider audience."

Krantz provides answers to some of the most asked questions about Bigfoot, the leading one being "Why haven't we found bones of a Sasquatch?"

"No explanation is needed; it would be quite surprising if there were any bones found," he says. "It is not normal to find the remains of large, uncommon animals. I have yet to find a hunter or

game guide who has found a bear that died a natural death. Hikers never come across the bones of wolves, coyotes, martens, badgers, etc., unless they were killed by humans."

Another question, akin to the first, is this one: "With so many hunters out in the hills, why hasn't somebody shot one by now?"

Besides replying with some psychological logic, Krantz lists three reasons:

"In the first place, the Sasquatch is apparently a very rare animal — there may be 100 bears for every Sasquatch — so the number of encounters with man is correspondingly low.

"Second, the Sasquatch seems to be mainly nocturnal, thus reducing encounter still more.

"Third, their eyesight is at least as good as ours, which makes them far better able than bears to avoid human contact if they wish to."

Krantz, by the way, makes the interesting observation that the mountains today probably have fewer people in them than at any time in the past 12,000 years. Gone are the Indians, trappers, prospectors, explorers, even sizable numbers of loggers.

Another question about the Sasquatch of prime interest: "Is the Sasquatch human?"

To which Krantz strongly says: "No."

Walking on two legs does not make an animal human, "unless one wishes to include penguins, tyrannosaurus and kangaroos in this category," he says. "There are three more lines of evidence which might indicate human culture: the making and using of tools, coordinated social groups and

communication of information by language.

"No dependable Sasquatch reports include any of these activities. The Sasquatch appears to be a perfectly normal animal."

Krantz, who has remained at the forefront of the Bigfoot issue since the 1970s, was a central figure later in 1982, at a conference of the International Society of Cryptozoology at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, B.C.

It was at this session that Krantz made some exciting revelations about the tracks of the Blue Mountains Bigfoot. What he said made them different from all other Bigfoot tracks which had been found elsewhere to that date.

Krantz told fellow ISC members at the conference that the Bigfoot of the Blues made tracks containing skin ridges and furrows like those found only on the higher primates.

"The fine detail on the casts is evidence of the authenticity of the legendary, ape-like creature that is said to roam furtively throughout the Pacific Northwest," the AP story noted, as its writer quoted Krantz.

Krantz went on:

"The ridge and furrow pattern is something I'm afraid for a number of reasons seems to be beyond the ability of anybody to fake."

Krantz said the arch pattern of the ridges and the narrow furrows were "exactly the kind you'd expect in a primate." He also said the casts show some distinctive movement of the toes.

This AP story held another interesting point or two.

It had a quote from Paul Freeman, who said he felt vindicated by Krantz' findings.

Freeman also announced he would hunt for the creature until he found one. Exactly what he has been doing for ten years!

The AP story out of the Vancouver conference concluded:

In advancing his claim of authenticity, Krantz said the area in which the prints were found (less than 25 miles east of Walla Walla, Wash.) was inaccessible to the public and that the stride between the prints and their depth indicated the creature was more than eight feet tall and weighed about 750 pounds.

While there is "nothing remarkably new" in this, the information combined with the existence of the dermal ridges makes the sighting more believable than others," Krantz said.

The casts are the first of thousands that have been made over the years to clearly show dermal ridges, Krantz said. He attributed that to the good mud the prints were found in.

Krantz said a police fingerprint expert who studied the casts is convinced the ridges could not have been made by a human pushing his fingers into the print.

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As I mentioned above, in reporting the challenge of John Green, one of the very first investigators of the Bigfoot, it was to note that several others like him had put in an appearance in Walla Walla following Freeman's sighting.



These included Bob Titmus and Rene Dahinden, the latter having investigated Bigfoot for about 40 years. And, Titmus claims he has seen three of the creatures! I penned this report in my July 4, 1982, column:

"Wayne Long, fire management officer of the Walla Walla District (of the Umatilla National Forest) talked at length with Green and Titmus when they were here. He spoke highly of their objectivity.

"They obviously came here to examine the Bigfoot issue; not pro- or anti-Bigfoot, just here to examine the material and to ask questions. Both had seen hoaxes before about the Bigfoot thing.

"They both talked to Freeman and both seemed to think Freeman truly had seen something."

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Yes, it was pretty obvious that Paul Freeman had seen something that day in June 1982.

But, would he be able to vindicate his first experience with finally again sighting and possibly the capture of a Bigfoot?

It would seem a nearly impossible venture, but it is a venture we will tell about in the full story of the Bigfoot of the Blues.

The full story will hold much, much more about this elusive creature and how it has made camping, fishing and hunting the Blue Mountains an experience sometimes "out of this world."

The full story of the Bigfoot of the Blues will contain information about the Bigfoot in general and especially its life here. Plus answers to these questions: Is there more than one Bigfoot here? Is

there a "family" of Bigfoots? Is there a UFO connection with the animal? Is it of this world or are their paranormal aspects to consider?

If yes is the answer to most of the above, we have the makings of a book well worth your reading.

## CHAPTER 3

THE AUTHOR AND BIGFOOT OF THE BLUES ...  
"HOW I MET UP WITH THE SUBJECT AND A BIT  
OF BACKGROUND ... ON ME AND IT, THAT IS."

When it comes to this subject I'm often asked one of two questions ... two queries, but with nearly the same words:"

1. "You don't believe in this Bigfoot thing, do you?"

2. Or, a little more objective question: "Do you believe in Bigfoot?" When I respond that I do believe, I usually get this additional comment: "You DO?"

I think you can understand the hesitancy to answer to either of the above (both seemingly already answered) but I do.

And so, I shall share with you what I have seen, have read (many books over many years) and have heard from AND EXPERIENCED WITH others who have spent more time than I in the research of this most fascinating subject.

So .... in the words of another speaker on a

similar subject:

"Bearing in mind that these things don't exist and making every allowance for your natural conviction that they could not -

— let us proceed.

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My own involvement with what I call the "Bigfoot of the Blues" story began in 1965 when a man came into the Union-Bulletin newsroom to report some "really big" human-like footprint tracks he'd seen on the upper Mill Creek Road. This story I wrote for the paper made the AP wire and was spotted by Roger Patterson of Yakima, who came over that weekend to investigate. Patterson is the man who two years later shot the only film of a moving Bigfoot, on a trip into the mountains near Willow Creek, Calif. While some Hollywood makeup people agreed it could be duplicated, they also agreed it would take a few million bucks to do it!

Patterson is dead but Bob Gimlin, the man who was with him that day, still resides in Yakima. And still swears they saw a Bigfoot!

While Patterson went back to his self-appointed role of Bigfoot seeker and part-time rodeo performer, I continued my own role of newspaper reporter for the (Walla Walla) Union-Bulletin. This job, from 1951 to 1971, was as the paper's "Roving Reporter," covering a newsbeat of 12 counties of Southeastern Washington and Northeastern Oregon. In the heart of this sizable piece of Northwest geography lay the Blue Mountains. This ancient range of mountains stretches from SE Washington, diagonally through

Oregon. It is a popular outdoors mecca for anglers, deer and elk hunters and others who enjoy a host of outdoors recreation.

It obviously was also a popular "playpen" for Bigfoot (or a "family" of Bigfoots) as events of 1982 (and the next 10 years!) were to prove.

At the northern end of the Blue Mountains is located the sizable area of the Mill Creek Watershed, prime source of water for the City of Walla Walla since 1918. In 1978, by action of the U.S. Congress, an even bigger chunk of the Blues was set aside as the Wenaha-Tucannon Wilderness Area.

It is within this area of hundreds of square miles that so many sightings of Bigfoot and his tracks and other evidence have been seen in the last decade.

And what a decade was launched in June of 1982 when U.S. Forest Service patrol rider Paul Freeman came face to face with a Bigfoot. That story, in detail, and what followed, is, of course, what this book is all about.

But, when Freeman, who rode the Mill Creek Watershed to keep out humans and cattle, reported what he'd seen, the "Bigfoot of the Blues" story really took off. For me, reporting the many incidents and sightings since then, it was especially momentous, but for the Bigfoot world at large, the sighting was also a major, major story.

The Bigfoot activity in the watershed and the adjoining wilderness area has drawn all the big names of that Bigfoot world, such as John Green, Bob Titmus, Rene Dahinden, Grover Krantz and many others.

All that interest has culminated in very recent years (1991 and 1992) with the findings of huge footprints stretching for miles (yes, MILES!) of something coming down out of the mountains to roam around the ranch homes of people as close as seven miles from Walla Walla.

As it has been with any subject of much interest to me in my reporter career, I started (in 1965) saving material related to Bigfoot. I now have a couple of filing cabinet drawers filled with newspaper and magazine clippings as well as a shelf of books on the subject.

I have also become a member of some organizations which seek the truth in the matter. This includes an informal gathering of a dozen or so Walla Wallans, who have followed a lot of Bigfoot tracks and many other indications of the creature.

While the bulk of Bigfoot sightings — of the animal itself and of his tracks and other vestiges — have been in British Columbia, Washington, Oregon and California, many have been found right close to home. The Blue Mountains have become a prime Bigfoot area. A reason for that of course is the Mill Creek Watershed, closed to mankind except for a short elk season. And since 1978, when it was created right along side, the Wenaha-Tucannon Wilderness Area. Thus you have an area about 25 air miles east to west and the same north and south in which Bigfoots can roam practically at will. Man can't get into the area except on foot or horseback. And the Watershed only a few on a special hunt permit.

One of the most comprehensive surveys of

sightings of tracks and of Bigfoot itself, was done in 1988 by an avid Puget Sound area researcher-tracker, Kevin Lindley. The wall chart he and his associates assembled has some 700 sightings and thousands of footprints of the creature. Lindley notes that "thousands more likely went unreported because of fear of ridicule." The chart lists sightings up and down the Pacific Coast, ranging from Ketchikan, Alaska, to the Mammoth Lakes south of San Francisco. Lindley had assistance from all the top Bigfoot trackers and research people and their reports. These people included Roger Patterson, Ivan Sanderson, Rene Dahinden, John Green, Grover Krantz, Paul Freeman, Wes Sumerlin and several others.

The last I heard of Lindley, he was living in Auburn, WA.

While Lindley's chart records thousands of tracks, we had thousands of tracks in a fairly small area a few miles east of Walla Walla in 1991 and 1992. And, many, many more besides.

Couldn't these tracks be faked?

Yes, and there probably have been more than a few done around here, as in many other places where such tracks have been found. But, the huge numbers of tracks I have seen in the most isolated areas make me feel the hoaxes are few and far between. At least in the really backwoods regions of the Blues.

For one thing, any hoaxter quite likely is going to make his tracks where he is sure they will be found.

For another thing, he'd better be making his feet

out of something darned clever, because I'm convinced an expert wildlife tracker will spot the fact the fake tracks are not "alive."

I have followed some of the best such trackers of beasts and man and have learned a lot in the past few years of looking for Bigfoot. One basic is that thing called "live" tracks. A good tracker can tell pretty quickly if he's looking at a track made by a live creature. He can tell you pretty much everything the creature was doing, as well as its physical dimensions.

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I'd like to share with you the findings of two trackers — one is from the old school (as the Indians learned it) and the other is of the modern school of tracking and outdoors survival.

I've already mentioned Wes Sumerlin, a guy with whom I've shared a lot of miles of horsebacking and experiencing the Blues like no other. Of himself, Wes had this to day:

"My brother, Swede, and I have been trackers, packers and guides in these mountains for most of our lives. All through the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s Swede and I spent a lot of time in these mountains, tracking down lost people. Swede raised a family of four children by trapping and hunting, mostly. We are Indian-white mixture, partially raised on a reservation. We were learning to track and hunt by the time we were three years old and were fishing by four years. In this period we were shown and told about tracks of the 'Wild Man of the Mountains.' You call him Bigfoot and Sasquatch. We were also told not to pursue such tracks until we were much

older."

Then, when the tracks were found coming out of the mountains to Mill creek in 1991, Wes and Swede spent a lot of days scouring them, back and forth. Here's some of Wes' report:

"Those tracks came ..... down through a fall-tilled field with approximately 10 to 12 degrees pitch. Tracks were three to four inches deep in the ground. A 350-pound man standing them (beside them) sank only 3/4 inch in the ground. The Bigfoot tracks were 15 inches long and 7 1/2 inches wide, packing no mud. The stride was approximately 30 inches, with the toes pointed slightly out for balance, tracks separated for balance instead of in line as normal. In the snow the tracks were from five to 16 inches deep, while the 350-pound man's tracks sank only an inch or less."

Wes Sumerlin, a guy who would have fit into our nation's fur-trapping era like a hand in a glove, will have more to say about this and a lot more about the Bigfoot of the Blues. Stay tuned!

The modern-day tracker is Greg May, instructor of outdoor survival classes at WSU. He is a graduate of the Tom Brown school of survival in New Jersey. May has been here on many trips to check on Bigfoot tracks. He was here when we found the 1991 tracks, one of several internationally known Bigfoot authorities who visited.

I cite the following from his report:

"I am 90 percent certain that this site is valid and not fabricated. I allow a 10 percent error for the possibility of the development of a fabricated prosthetic with the necessary flexile characteristics



inherent."

May also noted that a major point in reaching his conclusions was that "proper indicator pressure releases were evident in many instances. This rules out the possibility of hand-tooling, barefoot human or a flexible, crude prosthetic."

In other words, if you're going to fake a Bigfoot track, you'd better be good and don't just carve a foot out of wood or plastic and stamp it into the soft ground. The resulting tracks will not be what trackers call "alive" and the good trackers will know it. May's full report on the 1991 tracks will be found later in this book.

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Naturally, with all this reading and writing about Bigfoot of the Blues for a decade or more, I have some opinions on what I think a Bigfoot is.

I equate the creature with animals, such as bears, but he is one which just happens to be bipedal, or walks upright like a man. A bear, of course, is not upright but is down on all fours, only occasionally rising for a better view of what he thought he'd smelled upwind.

Bigfoot, from all I can learn, apparently uses no tools or fire and forages constantly for food of all kinds, vegetation or flesh. Being a creature of seven to eight feet tall, and probably weighing 600-800 pounds or more, it would require constant stoking, I'm sure!

We have found evidence the Bigfoot is stealing stashed deer kills of cougars here and it seems likely it could take a toll of newborn elk calves.

Another observation of mine is the seeming lack

of interest on the part of science to nail down this phenomena. A few belong to the International Society of Cryptozoology (the study of unknown animals). This group does explore and holds seminars on the subject around the world each year. I'll talk at length later on about the formation (in 1983) and goals of ISC.

Grover Krantz, professor of anthropology at WSU, is one of the few who has spent several years investigating Bigfoot here and in Canada and China. He is convinced there is "something" out there because of the amount of evidence. I like Krantz' statement on the animal:

"As Sherlock Holmes put it ... when you have eliminated the impossible, whatever remains, however improbable, must be the truth. Even if none of the hundreds of Bigfoot sightings had ever occurred, we would still be forced to conclude that a giant bipedal primate does indeed inhabit the forests of the Pacific Northwest."

One more thing about this Bigfoot creature: it's a highly fascinating subject and can gain a real grip on your mind. Paul Freeman left here in 1982 and returned to western Washington to live, but only for a short time. In a couple of years he came back to Walla Walla and has lived here ever since. He has seen a Bigfoot on two other occasions since the '82 meeting and probably reports more tracks and other evidence than anyone else.

He's also up in the mountains two or three days a week.

The huge hairy, manlike creature he came upon nearly 10 years ago is something he'll never forget.

It also represents something which has become an obsession, I guess. For, he feels he must some day bring home absolute proof of a Bigfoot in order to vindicate his first encounter.

## CHAPTER 4

The fascinating "Chief Bigfoot" story (legend) of SW Idaho ... What would you do if you captured a Bigfoot? ... Should this be done?

\* \* \* \*

"Bigfoot" means many things to many people.

The range is all the way from it's real to it's not.

And, a fringe who place it in between. That's an area we'll deal with later on. Admittedly, this area is one with few believers ... but some, nevertheless.

And then, on the other hand ... it IS a highly fascinating, if seemingly, to most, as a somewhat unreal region, yet truly a facet of the Bigfoot story.

We will also explore the beliefs of people other than Grover Krantz, in just what this creature is all about. Krantz will be heard from again, because this man does have so much to offer on the subject.

Findings of others will be given mention, for there have been (and are today) a host of people — men and women alike — out in the field, investigating every possible lead to locating a Bigfoot.

From the time I wrote my first story about the "Bigfoot of the Blues," I have accumulated reactions. Often, when a new story angle was printed in the Walla Walla "Union-Bulletin" and then in these

later years, the Waitsburg "Times," friends would accost me on the street to challenge or to share the hallowed words of this aficionado.

And, sometimes a friend would see my latest story on Bigfoot, then would pen his own feelings about the subject. My favorite of thee was that done by the well known Western author, Bill Gulick, who makes his home in Walla Walla. Bill was also the first to challenge the emerging story in the Blues. His letter to me came days after my first story appeared in the "Union-Bulletin" in 1966. I'd reported a motorcyclist's story about seeing some big tracks on the lonely Mill Creek Road.

Gulick needs little introduction around the United States as well as many other parts of this globe. His most recent writing effort was the excellent Oregon reference, "Roadside History of Oregon."

His novels, some made into movies, and other books about the West are popular to many. I think you'll enjoy his letter, with its highly interesting character leaping right out of the pages of our our Northwest history (and legends).

Gulick's letter follows:

"I've been intrigued to hear that my old friend, 'Bigfoot,' is now making tracks in our area. Lest some of your readers note that this legendary giant plays a prominent role in my recently published novel, 'They Came to a Valley' — and accuse me of concocting a publicity stunt — I hereby state that his tracks are his own responsibility, not mine.

"While doing research at the Idaho Historical

Society during the past six years, I became intrigued with the 'Bigfoot' legend, and, out of curiosity, followed up every lead in an effort to ascertain whether this tale was fact or fancy. Here is what I discovered:

"First reference to 'Chief Bigfoot,' as the early settlers of southwestern Idaho Territory called him, appeared in 1862, when an expedition of citizen volunteers out Indian hunting claimed they came across his tracks on the banks of Snake River. The tracks measured seventeen and a half inches in length by six inches in width.

"Between 1862 and 1868 a dozen or so references appeared in the newspapers of the area regarding Chief Bigfoot invariably they were second hand. 'Somebody' had seen 'somebody' who had seen him. He was alleged to be a part-white, part-Indian renegade who had become a leader of all the hostiles in that part of the country and was waging a war of extermination against the whites. After 1868, he is heard of no more.

"By odd coincidence, 1868 marked the end of the Indian troubles in that part of the country, for General George Crook, after a long and grueling campaign, had exterminated, starved or frozen out those savages who chose to resist and forced the rest to go onto reservations.

"Chief Bigfoot was reliably reported to have been 'killed and carried off by friends,' at least a half dozen times during the campaign — but I have found no first-hand account by any person that ever saw him.

"He was known by many names: 'Oulux,' 'We-

aah-we-ha,' 'Nampuh,' — all of which appear to be different Indian dialects meaning 'Bigfoot.' The town of Nampa, Idaho, seems to have been named for him.

"In 1878, some ten years after General Crook had pacified the hostile Indians of southwestern Idaho, eastern Oregon and Northern Nevada, a long article was published in the Boise 'Idaho Statesman,' entitled: 'Bigfoot's Last Fight.' It was authored by one William T. Anderson, who claimed to have been an eye witness to an epic duel between a white gunman named John Wheeler and Chief Bigfoot.

"The duel was supposed to have taken place in a canyon — since known as 'Bigfoot Canyon' — just south of Snake River on the stage road between Nampa and Silver City. The eye-witness claimed that John Wheeler put 17 bullets from a Henry rifle into the monster's body before finally bringing him down. Even then, such was the vitality of Chief Bigfoot, he was able to down a pint of whisky, and then, as he lay dying, dictate a full confession so lengthy that it had to be published in several installments in the 'Statesman.' Later, it was picked up and reprinted in Eastern papers such as the St. Louis 'Globe-Democrat.' Readers interested in this curious document may find it on pages 145 to 160 in a book called 'Heroes and Heroic Deeds of the Pacific Northwest' by Henry L. Talkington, Caxton Press, 1929.

"The eyewitness, who fortunately had a tape measure with him, recorded Bigfoot's height as six feet, eight, his foot at 18 inches or so in length and

estimated his weight to be over 300 pounds. Bigfoot claimed his real name was Starr Wilkinson and that he was related to the famous outlaw families of that name back in Oklahoma and Missouri.

"How a man with 17 bullet holes in his body could even HOLD a point of whisky, let alone live long enough to make such a lengthy confession, are facts not explained by the author. Also not explained is the 10-year lapse between the battle — July, 1868 — and the eye-witness account published in the 'Statesman.'

"But, a number of people seem to have accepted it as true at the time. As a matter of fact, even today on the north shore of Snake River on Idaho State Highway 45, a local Pioneer Society has erected a sign entitled: 'Bigfoot's Last Fight,' which immortalizes the alleged duel between the giant Indian and the gunman, John Wheeler.

"Far be it from me to question the credulity of local Pioneer Societies. To me, this is a legend — and an interesting one — and in my recent novel, I have accepted it as a part of regional lore. As a matter of fact, almost all Western communities have legends of giant Indians, giant lake serpents, etc. — as do distant lands such as the Himalayas, with their Abominable Snowman.

"Dr. Merle Wells, archivist for the Idaho Historical Society, tells me that in his opinion 99 percent of the Bigfoot story is fancy though there is perhaps one percent evidence that at one time or another a tremendously big Indian did exist in Idaho Territory. As to the supposed eye-witness account by William

Anderson, this obviously was concocted by a newspaper writer with nothing to do on a rainy day — and, as fellow writers, you and I can only hope that he was paid properly for his efforts.

“I do know it to be a fact that, on several occasions during the late 1860s, teen-age youngsters improvised gigantic moccasins, made big footprints, cut clotheslines, robbed watermelon patches and tipped over outhouses, hoping that the blame would be placed on Chief Bigfoot. But of course youngsters do not pull such pranks today ... ”

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Needless to say, I treasure this letter from long-time friend and fellow writer, Bill Gulick.

For several years during my 20-year assignment as the “Union Bulletin’s” Roving Reporter, it was my good fortune to share several trips into the fabulous John Day Country of Eastern Oregon. Hosting these three- and four-day auto rides was a former resident of the John Day area, retired school teacher, newspaper columnist and poet, W. S. Caverhill. He was a master of the short, punchy commentary, a style befitting and even equaling Will Rogers’ one-time newspaper column.

Four years after the Mill Creek sighting and Gulick’s letter, I reported a sighting of a Bigfoot in the vicinity of Tiger Canyon east of Walla Walla. Caverhill “put me (and the report) in my/its place with this paragraph in the Milton-Freewater (Oregon) “Valley Herald:”

“BIGFOOTAGAIN — A recent article in the Walla Walla Bulletin by Vance Orchard, in which he



claims that he and a chum of his saw something, or heard something, or thought they did, in Tiger Canyon, that was Bigfoot. No soap, Vance, it has been previously established that Bigfoot has taken up residence in the Strawberry Wilderness Area and is getting his mail at Van, Oregon. There is no point in throwing a scare into the people of the Walla Walla Valley, by locating the beast in Tiger Canyon."

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RON CARLSON SPINS ONE! — A tongue-in-cheek tale to match the size of a Bigfoot's foot came from the facile mind of writer-photographer Ron Carlson. Carlson, of course, needs no introductions in the Blue Mountains region. For several years now he has been entertaining (and educating) residents with his photographic skills and occasionally the printed word. While a photographer by trade, Carlson has demonstrated more than once his equal artistry with word weaving.

Those skills came out when he sat down to his word processor one day following my reporting the finding of miles of Bigfoot tracks coming out of the Blue Mountains in January, 1991. The reader is hereby advised to use ample salt over the shoulder in the reading of what he wrote, which began this way:

"Inspired by Vance Orchard's recent story in THE TIMES about Bigfoot, I decided to put the issue at rest, hike into the Blues, find this shy, elusive giant, interview him (or her) and break the story in THE TIMES.

"I realize such action may seem bold, audacious,

even dangerous to some of you readers, but then that's the way we veteran journalists are: the story, the photo, the facts and the unvarnished truth are what we're after and we don't accept substitutes."

Well, Carlson has set the tone in those two "grafs," and having done so, he decides he'll do something with his upcoming weekend of rest following the "grind" of getting THE TIMES to bed for another week. He considered doing nothing, but then the Bigfoot issue came to mind:

"But the thought of Vance Orchard's story and the elusive Bigfoot came to mind and I decided to do something to uncover its mystery. It occurred to me that an interview with Bigfoot would be just the thing to clear the air, render a public service, deliver a fast-breaking story for next week's edition of THE TIMES and grab a Pulitzer Prize to boot!"

Wow! what an agenda! Anyway, armed with a bag of cameras, map, protractor and a pencil, our hero soon found himself in an isolate corner of the Blues, on the headwaters of Whiskey Creek at something known (by him, at least) as Babbling Falls — something Carlson admitted to being "...a deliberate, even premeditated choice on my part. You see, I figure it this way. Vance Orchard, Wes and Swede Sumerlin, Paul Freeman, et al, have got this real passion to find Bigfoot, solve the mystery of all those muddy tracks, and bring Bigfoot into the public eye. I don't fault them for their interest and curiosity, but I'm convinced they've been going about it in the wrong way."

No, Carlson's reasoning went, don't go chasing around, just sit yourself down at a campfire, put a

bit of music on a tape recorder and wait.

Wow! Why didn't we (all of the above, that is!) think of that?

Carlson's wait was short, he writes:

"I didn't have to wait long, either. I had just poured myself a cup of brew, cracked the cover of 'Best Loved Poems from Whiskey Creek,' when I heard splashing water up the canyon.

"In a short time, this barefooted but elegant-looking creature came into camp. He sniffed the fresh coffee and asked politely, 'European roast?' I nodded, poured him a cup and invited him to sit down."

Carlson notes that his woodsy visitor was silent for a time, then indicated his knowledge of and enjoyment of Carlson's taped music. The story continues:

"Although I was pretty sure who this visitor was, I decided formalities were in order and I introduced myself and then asked his name. 'I'm Bigfoot,' he said softly, with a Deadman's Peak accent, 'Percival J. Bigfoot III. You've probably heard of me. I've been in all the papers. Most of it has been misinformation, but I have generated a lot of ink, almost as much as Joe Montana and Saddam Hussein. But, it's mostly hearsay, rumor and wild gossip. Actually, no one until now, has ever seen me! I wouldn't allow it. I don't take kindly to being chased. But, I could see, by the creature/friendly environment you've created here, that you weren't like most of 'em. I decided to come by and check you out.' "

Carlson wrote that he and Bigfoot (who preferred to be called "Percy,") exchanged conversation for

two hours on a wide range of subjects (knowing Carlson, I can believe that part of his story!) and Carlson claims to have learned a lot about his campfire guest.

But as with all good things, even this unusual confab had to end. Carlson's tale continues:

"We talked and talked and began to experience that good rapport which springs up between two souls traveling the same direction, if not the same road. But, at moonrise, Percy said he had to go, the family was waiting and tomorrow began a long skiing weekend up on Deadman's Peak, with relatives and friends.

"I'd ask you to join us," he said, "but not just yet. I want to tell the family about you first. Point out that you're not one of those mad dog reporters who'll do anything for a story, even sell his soul for a Pulitzer! We'll get together again; you know how. And, we'll get better acquainted. You'll get to see and understand why the Bigfoot tribe doesn't enter into your so-called civilization. Maybe you can write it in *THE TIMES* and others will begin to understand, too. That would be good — for all of us!" "

Hey, we're getting some "meat" on the "bones" of this Carlson caper! But, let the story unwind and conclude:

"And so, although I started out to get a scoop, a fast-breaking story, a Pulitzer Prize, I got instead some correction, a better understanding of the Bigfoot phenomenon. And, the promise of further insights into their lives and philosophical views. "Before we parted, I asked Percy if it would be OK

to write a story about our meeting. Naturally, I didn't want this story to spoil their skiing weekend by sending hordes of the curious up to Deadman's Peak. Percy told me to go ahead and write it, that it wouldn't make any difference to their weekend plans.

" 'Even if an army invaded the mountain,' he said, 'they wouldn't find us. All they would see would be tracks, and it would further confuse them. You see, there are other dimensions of life as yet undiscovered by your race. See you again.' "

"I didn't take any photos to go with this story, reader, but I'm sure you can see why. Souls like Percy Bigfoot III can't be caught on film — or any other way."

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Yes, friends have had a field day with their tongues-in-cheek.

But, "Chief Bigfoot" surely got around the Pacific Northwest, judging from the accounts accumulated over many years, before and since the demise in the desert of the huge gun-toting Indian. The sightings and increasing credibility of the big chief (in the form of a walking, hairy Bigfoot?) add interesting spice to this chapter.

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The problem of what to do with a Bigfoot if one was to be captured has long been one of the most interesting facets to this story.

The "Bambi" or "Disney" syndrome has even been given the creature in the movie, "Harry and the Hendersons." And, the State of Washington, in observing its Centennial in 1989, even adopted the

Bigfoot as its official mascot for the year.

Furthermore, this '89 mascot was given a name: "Harrison," to honor Benjamin Harrison, who was president of the U.S. when Washington became a state!

At this time, two persons, one in Walla Walla and the other is what was then the Soviet Union, shared some similar ideas on what should be done about securing a Bigfoot. The late Dick Bradford of Walla Walla was one Russian scientist Marie-Jean Koffman is the other. Here's the story I did in the "Union-Bulletin" in 1988:

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Dick Bradford, Route 2, has been at the trapping business around here since he was a youngster, so brings to this proposal no small background of knowledge should such an expedition get off the ground.

Bradford doesn't come into the game with scant knowledge of the object of the project, either.

"Lots of people don't believe in Bigfoot and I was one of them for a long time," Bradford says. "I've researched this subject for 35 years and I'm convinced there is such a thing."

Further, Bradford says he is convinced the "time is at hand when we should try for one of these things ... we shouldn't pass up an opportunity to capture this critter ... only 35 miles or so from downtown Walla Walla."

Bradford also says his three decades of research have convinced him the Bigfoot is "a prehistoric cave dweller ... and the nearby Blue Mountains have plenty of caves in them, and many

are in the Watershed, the likely headquarters of the critter..."

If Bradford's plan is followed, there would be no shooting of a Bigfoot and furthermore, any Bigfoot caged would be displayed right up there in the mountains, he adds.

"Then, when science has taken its samplings, and other testings, etc., then the thing should be released right where it was found."

The many years of trapping and bringing some wily animals down (such as the coyote, one of the most difficult) comes out as Bradford notes: "I think the Bigfoot can be trapped and if there is one them up there, it can be captured."

Bradford is fully aware that such an expedition would not be without peril and would also be quite costly to underwrite.

"But think of the publicity and the people who would want to come here for a close look at this thing ... it would be in popular demand all over the world. We should make the attempt to be the first in the world to capture one and answer a lot of questions in the minds of scientists and lay people alike."

Yes, the subject of our state's Centennial mascot is on the minds of several scientists, for that matter, being given a lot of serious consideration. Perusal of a recent issue of the "ISC Newsletter," publication of the International Society of Cryptozoology, reveals interesting opinions of a Russian scientist.

She is Marie-Jean Koffman, considered the leading field investigator of the Soviet version of

Bigfoot, the Almas (wild man). Koffman was interviewed by Newsletter editor J. Richard Greenwell. Her remarks concerning the possible capture of a Bigfoot (Almas, Sasquatch, etc.) were especially interesting. Greenwell asked Koffman's thoughts on the impact of the discovery of such a creature.

"I think that the impact will be enormous," she responded. "It will open new horizons to old dogmas in anthropology, medicine, psychology, sociology and other disciplines. It will perhaps answer most of the questions that we have asked ourselves about our origins."

Koffman said she meant this in philosophical, moral and physical senses.

"One of the most fascinating aspects is the interpretation that *Homo Sapiens* gives of this wild double of himself, about which he has always known, in some way."

Asked for elaboration on this statement, Koffman replied, "this double, who is a kind of shadow of man ... he has been watching man, always has, from the depths of the forest. This double is like a caricature of man ... no longer as an animal, but yet not quite human."

"And what would be the moral implications if we were to capture some of these, in terms of their 'human rights,'?" Greenwell asked. "...would they be treated more like an aboriginal or native peoples in need of protection as human beings?"

"Because of the close evolutionary relationship between us, they should be treated as humans," asserts Koffman. "However, the concept of treatment



as an equal is not necessarily a fortunate one, since we treat fellow humans as equals in ways which are not always very benevolent.

"We who are doing research on these wild men hope from the deepest parts of our hearts that, if they are discovered, they will not be treated like chimpanzees and other laboratory animals."

Listening to Walla Walla's Dick Bradford and reading the opinions of Moscow's Marie-Jean Koffman it becomes apparent here are two people a half a globe apart but each with similar thoughts on a similar anomaly.

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As this book is being written (mid-1992) Dr. Koffman is one of the leaders mounting a massive, highly scientific search for the Almas in her native land.

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*Dick Bradford was no stranger to readers of the "Union-Bulletin" when his proposal (above) made the media. The following story was one I had earlier done on the man, his trapping background, including why he finally gave up this activity) and his Bigfoot encounters.*

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Dick Bradford was 12 when he ran his first trapline for muskrats near Umapine (a tiny farming community west of Walla Walla).

Seven years ago ... and 55 years later ... Bradford hung up his traps for good, vowing never to trap or kill another animal.

That came the day he had to shoot the finest specimen of a coyote he'd ever seen, an animal he'd

become skilled at trapping because he'd learned to "think just like one."

Knowing the habits (down to the most minute detail of the animal's hour-by-hour life style) is what constitutes a successful trapper, Bradford learned early.

That was back in the 1920s when he started. Times were tough and money not easy to come by, especially for a 12-year-old, he recalls.

"It was 35-below that winter, too," he notes. "When I finally caught my first one, I thought I had done something. I caught eight that first winter and did well, at \$1 a pelt. That doesn't sound like much, but in those days that was a helluva lot of money, especially when you might only make a dollar a day working ... if you got the work."

Bradford did get work (he was a truck driver most of his life) but he continued trapping almost every season for some 55 years until the day he found the big coyote in one of his traps on Lewis Peak.

And, some seasons he made more money off his trap lines than he did a regular job, he says.

How about this matter of "thinking like an animal to catch one?"

Bradford doesn't go into details of how he learned the ways of the wily coyote, but does explain partially.

"When I first started trapping coyotes, I trapped all fall and never caught one, so I went out north (of Walla Walla) and set some traps. Then, I got 'way back and out of sight and studied every move made

by the coyotes, using my binoculars.

"I learned a whole of a lot (about coyotes) that winter. Then, when I started trapping the next season, I caught a whole lot of them with no effort whatsoever. A government trapper pulled out when the animals petered out.

"I learned more about coyotes than would ever be found in a book."

Bradford says he "was all but living with them ... but if you are going to make a living at trapping, you must learn this."

While most of Bradford's trapping experience has been in the valley and the Blue Mountains foothills, he has run a line in the Lewis Peak area of the Blue Mountains. It was here that he trapped the big coyote and where he ended his trapping of wild animals.

It is in the mountains especially that one must study all details of terrain as well as the animal habits and habitat, Bradford says. "If you're going to be a successful trapper you must study the mountains ... you must notice everything and not overlook a thing ... the way grass is bent ... a tree limb snapped off here and there ... read that sign and you can track and trap...."

Bradford says the coyote he trapped on Lewis Peak was "the biggest, most beautiful I ever saw. Apparently he was the leader of a sizable pack of coyotes, too, judging by the many tracks trampling down the snow all around him.

"And, he knew when I came upon him, that I was going to shoot him ... he set up a peculiar whining and howling, almost as if he was begging

me to spare his life. I would have given \$200 if I could have turned him loose but I couldn't.

"An ordinary coyote (in the mountains, especially) will weigh around 22-25 pounds. This one went 50 pounds."

And, so, despite the challenge present in trapping coyotes, Bradford ended his trapping when he bagged that "king of the mountain."

"I have always liked a challenge," Bradford says, "and the coyote is one of the smartest animals we know. And he has a nose that won't quit. He can pick up a scent more than a mile away.."

Bradford, now retired from trucking and trapping alike, has been turning his talents to another elusive Blue Mountains wildlife species: Bigfoot, or Sasquatch as it is known in British Columbia. Several people claim to have seen Bigfoot (and more than one) in the Blues, Bradford says. The most celebrated 1982 sighting here by a U. S. Forest Service watershed patrol rider, Paul Freeman, is not the first incident, Bradford says.

"My family's research goes back 30-40 years and we have been researching and cataloging material about it," he says.

However, although he and his wife eight years ago had what each feels was a "near close encounter," they have yet to see one.

"I've never seen one, but everyone who tells me they have seen one, says it is the most unusual thing of their life."

Even the experience he and his wife had while he was picking up raccoon traps on Mill Creek was "the weirdest feeling of my life. I hope I never

experience it again," he says. His wife echoes the statement.

"It was just a feeling ... a sensation that something was nearby ... I can't explain it," he says.

And, two days before that, also on Mill Creek, Bradford says he came back to a big boulder, to which he'd wired a trap, to find the boulder (four feet in diameter) had been moved 30 feet away. "It apparently had been picked up by something and heaved to one side, as there were no dragging marks," Bradford recalls.

Bradford is gathering more material and talking to people like Freeman and Wes and Swede Sumerlin as he seeks to become acquainted with the "pattern" or lifestyle of the Bigfoot. It is the same as when he was learning about coyotes, he says.

"It's the same for Bigfoot ... not only must you learn all about him, but you must out think him in order to find him," the ex-trapper says.

Bradford is pitting his long time skills of a trapper to the catching of a Bigfoot, using the same techniques he learned in a half century of trapping muskrats, raccoons and coyotes.

He is also confident the evasive, mysterious Bigfoot will be found this year, if not through his own efforts, then by somebody.

"I'll make a prediction," he says, "someone will get a Bigfoot this year, on film or dead, to prove its existence one way or another. Getting utter proof on film won't be easy, because the film shot by Roger Patterson in 1967 has had a lot of pros and cons."

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## CHAPTER 5

*First, it was the late-50s activity in northern California. Then a bit of movie film footage was shot by Roger Patterson. This was in 1967 and the Bigfoot saga began to take on reality as more media attention came and more believers came as well.*

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As more and more roads were constructed to open up more timber country in northern California, Bigfoot stories erupted in the late 1950s.

From the stories coming out of the region about workers seeing huge human-like footprints and 55-gallon oil drums tossed about when they returned to work, we soon were hearing reports of other Bigfoot appearances.

Soon, people were becoming quite involved in the search for this creature which some continue to believe is only a myth of Indian legends. These people included the late Roger Patterson and his riding partner, Bob Gimlin, from Yakima, Wash. Up in British Columbia others were to join forces in some cases or to go separate ways in others.

Objective in either case was to find a Bigfoot (or, Sasquatch, as the Canadians called it). Men like John Green, Rene Dahinden and Bob Titmus soon gained widest recognition for their expertise on Bigfoot.

All have been to Walla Walla and the Blue Mountains as the search for Bigfoot went into high gear following the sighting in 1982 by Paul Freeman.

Patterson and Gimlin, renting a 16-mm movie camera, launched their 1967 search on isolated Bluff Creek, out of the small mountain town of Willow Creek, Calif., east of Eureka. Patterson's film has been controversial in some quarters and hailed as the "real McCoy" in others. Certainly, the frames he captured of what appears to be a female Bigfoot seem authentic.

While Patterson died an untimely death a few years after the filming episode, his partner, Gimlin, lives today at Yakima.

And, remembers quite vividly — with no doubts about what he saw — that day on Bluff Creek.

That memory was recalled when I received my copy of the delayed autumn issue of the ISC Newsletter, publication of the International Society of Cryptozoology. Following is a story I did from that article:

The ISC Newsletter printed an excerpt from a Seattle newspaper which had run an interview with a man who probably should rate as the "forgotten man" of Bigfoot chronicles, Bob Gimlin of Yakima.

Bigfoot aficionados will recall the name Gimlin all right. He was the partner of the late Roger Patterson, a prime mover and shaker in the investigations about Bigfoot in the 50s and 60s and who gained a lasting footnote to fame with his photography of movies of a Bigfoot. Patterson died in 1972, just five years after that Bluff Creek, Calif., episode, shared with Gimlin.

While the Patterson film, has been labeled "hoax" by debunkers, it is also called the best evidence on

record by several, including some scientists.

What are Gimlin's feelings today, more than 20 years after he and Patterson spotted the huge, hairy creature striding up the creek bed? Here is an excerpt from the Seattle P-I article as carried by the ISC Newsletter:

"I'd have been better off if I said a long time ago that I believe it was a man in a fur suit because I took so much ridicule about it," said Gimlin, who has never profited financially from the film.

"But, Roger's been dead a long time now, so I kind of feel I owe it to people to tell about what we saw.

"We made the bend (in Bluff Creek, in northern California) -- here this thing stood by the creek, just stood. We were on one side of the creek, and the creature on the other, and our horses went crazy. Roger's little horse just went bananas."

Patterson then reportedly grabbed the movie camera from his saddle bags.

"As all this was going on," Gimlin continued, "this creature turned and started to walk away from us, just slow, like a man would if he were just walking down the street, but as it did this, Roger ran across the creek behind it, but then he stumbled on a sandbar. It was all happening. boom, boom boom. He was shooting the camera while he was running. He hollered ... 'Cover me!' and, naturally, I knew what he meant. So I rode across the creek on my horse and took my 30.06 rifle out of the saddle scabbard and just stood there but not aiming the rifle at the beast.

"When I did this," said Gimlin, "this creature



was quite a little ways away from me ... about 90 feet ... and it turned as it was walking. It never stopped walking.

"And then, I heard Roger say, 'Oh, my God, I ran out of film.'

"What he'd been doing was taking scenery-type pictures all the way up (to the creek site)..."

Does Gimlin believe in Sasquatch today?

"There's no question in my mind, none whatever," he stated.

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The Bigfoot story was soon being told in book form and many have since been written on the subject. A bibliography of several good Bigfoot/Sasquatch books will be included in this book.

One of the very earliest to tell the Bigfoot story in a book was the British Columbia newspaper publisher, John Green. His fine book, "On the Track of the Sasquatch," should be read by all who find this subject of interest. His first one was done in 1968, providing much history and lore about the Sasquatch, including pros and cons on the matter of belief.

Dahinden soon followed (1973) with his book, "Sasquatch," including several pages of photos (as does Green's book, by the way). Dahinden's book includes several frames of the Bluff Creek film.

Yes, Bigfoot, legend or fact, gained credulity as time passed and more and more media exposure came. The 70s were highly productive and a world-wide organization of scientists was organized, a portion of the thrust being to investigate as thoroughly as possible the Bigfoot issue.

A highly interesting Bigfoot feature appeared in the Dec. 8, 1974, Northwest Edition of the Seattle Post-Intelligencer, written by free-lance writer, Ilona Koidahl. Here we find an early reference to Gigantopithecus and the possibility that this link in the chain of man's evolution is still roaming the earth in the guise of Bigfoot!

In her article, Koidahl quotes two anthropology instructors who share this belief, Ula Moody of the Edmonds Community College and Grover Krantz of Washington State University.

"He (Bigfoot) would have to be a Gigantopithecus," Moody said, "and could easily have emigrated across the Bering land bridge during the Pliocene and Pleistocene periods."

Teeth and jaw fragments of "Giganto" have been unearthed in China since the 1920s, many found embedded in Pliocene and Pleistocene sediments of a million years ago.

"What the fragments came from, Moody said, was a Giganto. It is in the same super family as man ..."

And, would weigh in the 700-900 pound range and be eight to 10 feet tall And, those numbers, of course, fit Mr. Bigfoot of the Blues to a Tee!

Krantz was several years ago a believer in the "Giganto" theory, the Koidahl article pointed out.

A recent book (1990) tells of the search for evidence of "Giganto" in northern Vietnam. The book, "Other Origins," tells of expeditions of 1988 and 1989 to probe the question of Giganto and his demise ... who or what was he and how did he become extinct? Did humans have a role in that

extinction?

A Vietnamese anthropologist suggests early man hunted down the Giganto and killed them to the point of extinction.

But not before some made their way across the Bering land bridge into North America?

Considerably more credence for the Bigfoot came in mid-1975 with the "official recognition" of the creature in the Northwest by the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers. The story was reported by Associated Press with a Spokane, Wash., dateline, in the Walla Walla "Union-Bulletin" for July 6, 1975.

"Though branded as a myth by some, Sasquatch is described in detail in the 'Washington Environmental Atlas,' a \$200,000 Corps project designed to assist government and private planners.

"Also known as Bigfoot, the animal is 'reported to feed on vegetation and some meat,' the atlas says. "Sasquatch, it says, 'is covered with long hair, except for the face and hands and has a distinctly human-like form.'

"The Corps, which discusses Sasquatch in concluding an atlas section on important wildlife, says the beast is agile and strong but so shy that it leaves 'minimal evidence of its presence.'

"The Corps acknowledges that the existence of Sasquatch is 'hotly disputed.' It says some persons believe that 'not one piece of evidence will withstand serious scientific scrutiny.'

"However, the atlas also provides a map pinpointing all reports of Bigfoot sightings. And, it notes that hair claimed to be from a Sasquatch was

found on FBI analysis not to have come from man or any known animal.

"It says a Sasquatch stands up to 12 feet tall, weighs up to 1,000 pounds and strides up to six feet.

" 'If Sasquatch is purely legendary, the legend is likely to be a long time in dying,' the atlas says."

Later on, the Walla Walla office of the Corps of Engineers, in its newsletter, "Intercom," had some commentary worth recalling.

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"The Corps of Engineers may prove to be the salvation of Bigfoot.

"Bigfoot, also known by the Indian name, Sasquatch, is purported to be an eight-foot tall, 900-pound humanoid that roams the forest and wilderness areas of the Pacific Northwest.

"Although most governmental agencies scoff at the existence of Bigfoot, the Corps lists the creature as one of the native species for Washington State in the Corps' Environment Atlas of the state.

"New species of animals are constantly being discovered. In 1977, a Navy torpedo recovery vessel reeled in what was thought to be a torpedo, but turned out to be a 15-foot representative of a new species of shark. The shark, named Megamouth because of its bathtub-shaped lower jaw, had an enormous, short-snouted head and 484 vestigial teeth.

"Perhaps one of the reasons most government agencies play down the existence of Bigfoot can be discerned from several alarmist news releases issued by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service:

"Some officials doubt whether any state or federal action short of calling out the National Guard, could keep order in the area within the first few hours or days of the creature's discovery."

"The question arises, what if Sasquatch, after it is discovered, is hunted to the point of extinction? This has happened to a number of species of animals, birds and fish. Under U.S. law, the Secretary of Interior is empowered to list as endangered a species so threatened.

"'Normally, we must know a great deal about a species before we list it,' says a spokesman for the Fish and Wildlife Service. 'Many questions must be answered,' he says, 'such as how big is the population? Does it occur anywhere else? Is the population in danger of decline?'

"One of the first steps in placing an animal on the endangered species list is to recognize the fact that it exists. The only federal agency to do so to date (1981) is the Corps.

"The British, however, are a bit more broadminded about such subjects. A highly respected British scientific journal published a description of the supposed Loch Ness monster, proposing the name, *Nessiteras Thomobopyx*.

"Unlike their British colleagues, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service officials will not consider taking actions concerning hypothetical creatures. 'Obviously, if a Bigfoot really were found we could use the emergency provisions to protect it immediately,' a Fish and Wildlife spokesman says. 'But, for the record, I seriously doubt whether such a creature really does exist.' "

Such doubt was not evident, however, at a gathering of scientists in 1978 at the University of British Columbia. Here a scientist drew resounding applause from the Bigfoot enthusiasts in the audience. Cause for their applause? "Dr. Carlton Coon, anthropologist and author of 'The Living Races of Man,' waved two wooden models of Sasquatch footprints in the air to prove his point.

" 'A primate other than man, which is neither ape nor humanoid, is alive in this part of the world,' the 71-year-old scientist told the closing session."

This startling news was carried by Associated Press out of the meeting in Vancouver, B.C., of scientists at a weekend conference on "Sasquatch and other Phenomena."

I use the word "startling" because this session of scientists interested in Bigfoot/Sasquatch had convened to discuss primarily this subject! The meeting had been called in Vancouver, B.C., largely because the creature had been sighted many times in the Canadian province over several years. And, had drawn a lot of attention in the news media.

Big foot had already been sighted as well in many states, from New England to California, for that matter.

And, while Coon made the statement of belief in Bigfoot, a few other scientists were on his side. Grover Krantz, associate professor of anthropology at Washington State University, was among them at the meeting and had been a believer prior to the session. He long has been known as the first academic to declare for the authenticity of footprints of Bigfoot and for the belief in the creature's being

fact, not fiction, for that matter.

This 1978 meeting of scientists concerning Bigfoot was a first but it was not to be the last. Scientists such as Krantz, Coon and others who had leading roles at Vancouver, were among the leaders in the organization in 1983 of the International Society of Cryptozoology, a scholarly society geared to being a clearing house for information about "undetected" animals of the world.

This came at a meeting of interested scientists and others at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C.

It was the hope of Krantz and others that the formation of the ISC would help eliminate what was termed the "lunatic fringe" that had given the Bigfoot study a bad name. "Perhaps this society will help put things more on a scientific basis," he said.

Leaders elected for ISC included Bernard Heuvelmans, of the Center for Cryptozoology at LeBugue, France, named president; Roy P. Mackal, of the Department of Biology, University of Chicago, vice president and J. Richard Greenwell, secretary-treasurer and editor of publications. While the Society is primarily intended for biological scientists, membership is open to all interested persons. Membership shot to 400 or more at the outset and continues to interest numerous people in the world, all concerned with the discovery of undetected animals, which include Bigfoot.

Krantz was a founder and member of the board from the outset and is considered the Northwest's

leading authority on Bigfoot. He was an early investigator of the sighting in 1982 by Paul Freeman, declaring at the time that footprints found there proved that Bigfoot existed.

Membership in ISC is \$30 per year and includes a quarterly newsletter as well as an annual publication. Greenwell may be contacted for membership or other information at P.O. Box 43070, Tucson AZ. 85733. The telephone number is (602) 884-8369.

Annual meetings of ISC have been held in many parts of the globe, i.e., Scotland, Vancouver, B.C. and Pullman, Wash. Most have been devoted to several elements of Cryptozoology. The 1989 sessions on the Washington State University campus gave the entire spotlight to Bigfoot, with speakers coming from the U.S. and Canada. My column in the Walla Walla "Union-Bulletin" featured the highly interesting highlights of that gathering.

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"And the beat goes on.

"So continues the search for facts about the Bigfoot phenomenon, in spite of interruptions from outside sources prior to a membership meeting of the International Society of Cryptozoology in Pullman the past weekend.

"Gaining most of the headlines were the interruptions, but the meeting of the society provided a forum from which much new information was gained about Bigfoot.

"Paul Freeman of Walla Walla was the 'star' of the Sunday session. He is more than a claimant to



having seen a Bigfoot up close (in 1982). He has added three more sightings since then. The most recent was last fall (1988) when he and son Duane saw one and Duane recorded its image on film.

"When Freeman showed this film and some comparisons Sunday, then displayed a twisted sapling tree, he 'brought down the house,' as many of the 100 or so attending milled about the speaker when his presentation ended.

"Freeman, scheduled to appear on the first day of the two-day event, was visibly upset when he learned of the arrest of Erik Beckjord of Malibu, Calif. The California Bigfoot researcher was to aid Freeman in his slide presentation. Beckjord was released Saturday and showed Bigfoot material that evening at another gathering in Pullman, not a part of the ISC proceedings.

"Freeman, after reconsideration Sunday, went ahead with his display and report on his findings (on Bigfoot) in the Blue Mountains. (Freeman's findings, by the way have been monumental over the past 10 years of his almost daily pursuit of Bigfoot).

"The Freeman presentation was one of several that paraded past the podium for the audience, members of ISC and friends.

"A paper by Bruce Davis of Archer, Florida, told of a similar 'twisted tree' findings in Florida.

"Jim Hewkin, St. Helens, Ore., retired Oregon Fish and Wildlife biologist, told of interesting finds of boulders lifted to excavate for hibernating rodents, apparently the work of a family of Bigfoots.

"R. Pennington Smith, of Baltimore, Md.,

reported extensive Bigfoot findings in China and Russia, all similar to the Bigfoots of North America.

"Thomas Steenburg of Calgary, Alberta, told of investigations in Sasquatch sightings and material around Alberta.

"One of the most interesting thoughts advanced in the two-day meeting came from one of those who has been longest involved with the creature. He is John Green, Harrison Hot Springs, B. C. Green is author of some books about Sasquatch and has compiled records as complete as anyone's. It was Green's suggestion that a state or federal government set up a commission to study the possibilities of Bigfoot's existence in the state or nation. Maybe two groups could band together on the project.

"In other words, apply the legal possibilities to the solution, instead of the scientific, which has been the route to date.

" 'It might not work, but what we've been doing isn't working either,' Green said as he closed his remarks.

"In his earlier presentation of the history of Bigfoot/Sasquatch, Green provided some other interesting facts which have come to light thus far in the search for the creature. Some of his points include the following:

"Bigfoot walks upright, but its resemblance to man ends there. "The creature has night vision.

"There is no evidence Bigfoot has a home or uses caves.

"It has no speech or use of tools.

"There is no need to consider the animal

dangerous.

"It is not an endangered species — far from it — Bigfoot is one of the most widespread creatures in the world.

"In case you wonder where Green is coming from, consider this: he has more than 2,000 Bigfoot reports in his files, with more than two-thirds of them being sightings, the rest are reports of tracks.

"Paranormal aspects of the Bigfoot matter were not made a part of the WSU gathering. ISC concerns itself with only the zoological issues in this subject.

"The ISC membership meeting was hosted by the Washington State University department of anthropology, of which the sometimes controversial Grover S. Krantz is a professor. A paper prepared by Geoffrey L. Gamble, chairman of the anthropology department, was read by Donald Tyler, University of Idaho anthropologist. Tyler, in his prefacing remarks, noted the department's support of Krantz being a change from the past.

"Gamble's remarks noted that if research is conducted honestly it has a place in the scientific community, while noting that he was glad to see scientific opinion (on the Big foot matter) changing, if slowly.

"J. Richard Greenwell, secretary of ISC, noted that ISC 'has never sponsored a formal meeting on the Sasquatch problem before.'

"Timing of the meeting for the world wide group in Washington during the state's Centennial observation, fit well with the state's having adopted 'Harrison Bigfoot' as the Centennial animal of '89, Greenwell added.

"Now, if someone in Olympia will just grab the ball tossed out at the meeting by long-time Bigfoot researcher, John Green. Give the legal angle a chance."

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Yes, things had changed in the acceptance of Bigfoot as a valid creature of the country, especially the Northwest and in particular for the Walla Walla Country of the Blue Mountains. The activities following the 1982 Freeman sighting will be related in a chronological fashion, the next chapter dealing with the subject from the Forest Service's reaction to the Freeman sighting and then into stories of some of the people attracted to the Bigfoot of the Blues.

## CHAPTER 6

*Many people came to check out this  
"Bigfoot of the Blue Mountains" report*

His life was never to be the same for Paul Freeman after June 10, 1982.

That was the day of his close — VERY close — encounter with the Bigfoot of the Blues.

He reported the sighting to his superiors, the Walla Walla Ranger District office of the Umatilla National Forest.

Then, a lot of assorted hell broke loose.

Largely across the broad shoulders of the Forest Service watershed rider, Paul Freeman.

Today, Freeman will tell you: "I don't think I'd

have reported seeing a Bigfoot if I knew then what I know now."

What he means is what happened to him and even to his children. The entire Freeman family suffered ridicule over phone lines — despite a continual changing of unlisted numbers — and at school the children were given similar treatment by their peers.

The Freemans made a couple of house moves in the Walla Walla area, then moved to Western Washington.

All the time, Freeman was determined to vindicate that he had truly seen a Bigfoot. He still does. He returned to the Blue Mountains whenever he heard reports of Bigfoot tracks or other evidence. Like a man obsessed or driven, Freeman made several trips back from western Washington. Usually, he arrived several days after the sighting was reported to him. Often it was longer as he had a business to take care of.

So, making another adjustment, he brought his family back to Blue Mountains country and made their home in Walla Walla. This way he was able to stay on top of all reports. The move also enabled him to reach a few "hot" hunting spots in a relatively few minutes from his home.

Over the years since returning to Walla Walla Freeman has probably visited the nearby Blues two to four times a week on an average!

Some people ask the question: "How come Freeman sees all the Bigfoot stuff?"

It's a pretty good question but one which ignores the fact Paul Freeman spends so much

time in the mountains — probably more time than anyone else, including Forest Service personnell

+++

But, others too have sought the elusive Bigfoot of the Blues.

Many agencies and individuals have been here to see for themselves.

It started, of course, with a pretty intensive investigation by the Walla Walla District of the Umatilla National Forest, in whose territory the 1982 sighting had been made.

This investigation was to continue (and still does, to some extent!) through to the appearance in 1986 of the team of investigative reporters and cameramen from ABC-TV's "Good Morning America."

Wayne Long, now retired and living in Walla Walla, was a veteran of many years in the woods when the Bigfoot sighting hit his desk. Although his main job with the district was fire control officer, Long was assigned the Bigfoot matter, probably because of his long-time service in the Blues.

The size of the footprint made by the creature encountered by Freeman was a big issue for Long. Although he had been a woodsman for 35 of his 44 years Long said he had never seen anything resembling the tracks made that day by the Freeman monster.

"It's the first time I've ever seen a foot like this," Long told a U-B reporter the day after Freeman came out of the hills to report running into the Bigfoot.

The U-B story went on:

"Long has been a busy man since the news reports came out Friday that Paul Freeman, a Mill Creek Watershed patrol rider, claimed he saw what looked like a Bigfoot around noon Thursday. Freeman said he saw a creature about nine feet tall, with dark, reddish-black hair all over its body. He said the creature had long arms, that hung to its knees and walked hunched over.

"Long and several other Forest Service employees spent Friday afternoon analyzing the tracks in an attempt to determine the weight of whoever, or whatever, made the nearly 25 impressions in the soil.

"While Forest Service officials decline to guess the weight of whatever made the footprints, Long has made a deduction about the plaster cast that measures 14 inches long and seven inches at its widest part.

" 'I don't think this thing is man made,' he said. 'It was made by some creature. If it had been a single track or two tracks, I might dispute it. But, 25 tracks!'

"Long and the Forest Service employees shaped a steel plate the same size as the plaster cast. After placing the plate under a truck and jacking up the back end of the vehicle to push the plate into the ground, Long said he still isn't sure how much weight caused some footprints to be as deep as two inches. During the truck experiment, the steel plate penetrated the ground only about half an inch.

"While the Forest Service does not plan to

pursue further investigation of Thursday's incident, a Seattle-based organization will analyze the hairs found in the footprints cast and compare them to other hairs found at previous Bigfoot sightings. Project Bigfoot, which claims 85 members nationwide, collects data on all reported sightings, said the group's director, Jon Erick Beckjord of Seattle.

"Beckjord requested the Forest Service conduct Friday's truck experiment to determine the weight of the creature. He estimates the tracks were caused by something weighing more than 4,000 pounds.

" 'Maybe this was a robot, maybe like it's something alien,' he said. 'Indications are it's not an ordinary biological animal.'"

These words by Beckjord are highly intriguing.

They and their suggested subject matter will come up again in this book.

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My outdoors columns for the U-B that summer of '82 on several occasions carried mention of the Bigfoot matter. Usually, the U-B column was the sole source of information in the print media concerning the issue.

This could include the electronic media, for TV had not yet gotten very excited about such things as Bigfoot. We were to be subjected to national TV exposure, however, in 1986.

Of course, those who sought Bigfoot had ideas on what to do if a person sighted one or the encounter was pretty close. The following outdoors column of mine that summer had some



answers to this:

—  
AMAZON FROM AKRON — One of the most unusual visitors of the many who inundated the Walla Walla ranger office when the Bigfoot sighting report came in was a woman from Akron, Ohio.

Barbara Bilinovich says she has been "pretty deeply involved in this Bigfoot thing for four years," and has been following his tracks with a great deal of enthusiasm in Ohio. Now on a western jaunt to "do her thing," the tall Ohioan heard of the Walla Walla sighting and headed this way.

She claims she has seen "lots of footprints" in her forays wherever Bigfoot is sighted.

The last I heard from her, she said she was going to spend the night in the mountains where Freeman saw the creature. Then, she was heading for Mt. Shasta in California, where several Bigfoot sightings have occurred.

—  
WHAT TO DO? — If you see one of the Bigfoots in the Blue Mountains, what should you do?

Out of the conversation I've had recently and the extensive reading I've done for several years — as well as the course of action taken by Freeman when he saw one — the consensus seems to be:

Don't do a thing that would agitate the Bigfoot.

Several people feel shooting one should be a last resort and shouldn't be done because the thing is a part of the woods like any other wildlife.

Walla Walla artist Cliff Buehler painted his conception of Bigfoot several years ago when he was in the wild Middle Salmon River country of

Idaho. The Bigfoot topic was a heavy one around the campfires. What he sketched is quite close to the description given by hundreds of sightings reported in the Northwest and California.

Buehler is one who feels strongly that "even if we can't prove one is there, it should be protected — it would be a shame to shoot something like that and I'd like to see something like that protected as a vital part of the wilderness area up there."

Buehler, who has spent a lot of time in the woods, feels a Bigfoot creature "could live in the (Mill Creek) Watershed and not be seen if he didn't want to be."

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FIRMEST BELIEVER? — One who claims to have seen not one, but three Bigfoots in the Watershed is Wes Sumerlin of Walla Walla, who has packed sportsmen and their elk out of the Blue Mountains for 45 years.

He, too, feels the creatures should not be shot.

"They are not harmful," he declares. "But they can be dangerous — they are for real, so don't shoot 'em."

Sumerlin claims he has seen the Bigfoot reported by Freeman, along with two others, including one which he claims had been shot by hunters about 15 years ago. "There was a story about it at the time in your paper," he says.

Sumerlin says he is not the only person who has seen Bigfoot in the Blues, but so far has not wished to report them.

"These people are afraid of being ridiculed," he says.

*Wes Sumerlin figured in another outdoors column of mine almost a year to the day after Freeman's encounter with Bigfoot of the Blues.*

*The following from my U-B column dated June 12, 1983:*

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If ever there was a place in the Blue Mountains to shelter a bunch of Bigfoots it would be the Burnt Fork.

A look at a map of the Walla Walla District of the Umatilla National Forest might give a hint of that.

But, ride a horse down into the tight little valley and you'd see for yourself what I mean.

For just such a look three riders dropped off Lewis Peak on a recent weekend and rode into the Burnt — and several hard fought miles beyond before that lengthy weekend ran its course. Besides the writer, other mounted Bigfoot seekers were Wes Sumerlin and Rick Yetsko.

While Yetsko — veteran Baltimore-born cowboy and computer technician first class — has made a few trips into the area, the real vet was Sumerlin. He has packed in and ridden more of the Blues than most who do this sort of thing. It was to that experience of Sumerlin that we were to turn several times before we made it back to our Lewis Peak starting point.

Yetsko, as a trouble-shooting computer technician, does a lot of traveling around the country. As a youngster attending prep school, he was indoctrinated into the facts of the equestrian. He has been an ardent devotee of the saddle ever since.

Getting deeply involved in this hobby and an equal involvement in the Blue Mountains has become an even more important part of his life's style.

And, Bigfoot and Wes Sumerlin are just as big in his life.

This weekend horseback trip was inspired when Yetsko and his family had an experience on the Burnt which will forever be etched in their minds. It was while they were camped at their favorite spot there one evening that they had what they are convinced was at least a near encounter with a Bigfoot!

It was just a scant year ago that the Bigfoot was sighted by Paul Freeman and other tracks also were seen later.

Here, the Yetsko family saw several huge tracks in the dust of the trail near their Burnt Fork campsite. Then, they were treated to a series of the unusual whistling sounds reputedly made by Bigfoot in other reported encounters in the Blues and elsewhere in the Northwest.

When we three headed back to that site a week later, we failed to find any of the tracks. Photographs taken at the time by the Yetskos will, however, back up their sighting. Changing weather conditions, coupled with intensive use of the trail by game, mostly deer and elk, apparently removed tracks spotted nine days before by the Yetskos.

(Wes, Rick and I had ample adventures before we completed our weekend jaunt in the Blues ... including floundering around in deep snow, having the pack come unloaded from our mule and strewing it across a hillside, and losing a sleeping

bag when it rolled off into the canyon near dusk. And, snow covered so much of the terrain we were forced to make camp in the snow, melting snow for coffee-making and eating dried nuts and fruit rations!).

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This horseback caper a year after Freeman's close encounter was but one of the several which came in the years after June 10, 1982. I've already recounted the July, 1982, sighting of the many Bigfoot tracks by Freeman and his fishing party. A year after the sighting by Freeman at the boundary of the Watershed, the controversy was still simmering, of course, over what Freeman had seen that day. Then, a few weeks after the encounter in June, Freeman and several others found more excitement.

They came upon a place where newly harvested wild mushrooms and skunk cabbage had been stacked in piles three and four feet high, he said. And, surrounding the piles of vegetation were a lot of big footprints.

"We found tracks every place ... we must have found 5,000 tracks," he said. "We found so many tracks up there, we couldn't even follow them."

And, a year after the June 10, 1982, sighting, Freeman was recalling the experience, still with vividness to his recollection.

He says the creature he came across that day on an abandoned logging road was just as alarmed as Freeman. He recalled that the creature's reddish-colored hair on its head and neck "just kind of flipped forward" three times. "I could hear him

breathing. That was the only sound he made. I turned and ran for the truck. I dropped my keys. After I did get into the truck, I couldn't work the radio. I guess I was pretty excited."

Then and as he does today, Freeman was not backtracking from what he claims he saw. He resigned from the Forest Service, he says, citing he was "tired of the hassle and the pressure over the Bigfoot thing."

But, a year later, he was still excited thinking about that encounter.

"If I get to talking about that thing I still get goose bumps on me ... it scared the hell out of me," Freeman told Portland "Oregonian" reporter, Richard Cackle, on the first anniversary.

In his 1983 story Cackle recalls that Joel Hardin, a tracker for the U.S. Border patrol (hired by the Umatilla Forest to investigate the Bigfoot of the Blues) examined the tracks found by Freeman and another patrolman. "A year later (Cackle notes) Hardin still believes they were faked. Cackle said Hardin noted that the prints "had been molded to the contour of the ground, the little bumps and impressions and rocks like the feet of a flesh and blood animal might have done...."

Cackle said Hardin was convinced somebody had spent a lot of time preparing the plastic material for the feet.

Others commented at the time that the tracks examined by Hardin and the tracks earlier found by Freeman at the June 10 encounter site had differences.

Also countering the Hardin findings at that

time, of course, were the opinions of Dr. Grover Krantz, WSU anthropologist, who pronounced the tracks at the Freeman encounter were "definite evidence that Sasquatch was real."

The Forest Service, Cockle noted a year after the first encounter, had by then changed its stance on the Bigfoot matter. While at first (and especially after the Hardin opinion) the Forest Service had declared "probable hoax" for the tracks, a year later there had come a noncommittal attitude.

"We're just staying out of it," Walla Walla Ranger Gary Flanik said. "We're just reporting facts. We're not stating an opinion either way."

(As far as I know, this is the current attitude of the Forest Service).

The Forest Service had ample reason to feel potential problems had been posed with the Freeman encounter. There was a good chance amateur Bigfoot hunters would simply ignore the entry restrictions for the Watershed. A lot of requests to enter the Watershed were fielded by the Forest Service, all of which were turned down.

And, still are today, along with a steady patrol of the Watershed's perimeter (and interior!) by Forest Service law enforcement officers as well as the regular patrol riders.

The ABC-TV "Good Morning America" crew spent most of three days on the scene in mid-October of 1986. They got a lot of footage of the deep canyons and mountains of the Blues. They covered it by land and by air and even found a few tracks to picture in the documentary. When aired over a three-day span, the films made a lot more Ameri-

cans aware of Bigfoot but also of the creatures who have taken up residence in the northern reaches of the Blue Mountains.

But, was this of recent date?

Or, did the Bigfoot story go back in time? There was ample evidence forthcoming and possibly ABC-TV's documentary helped spring some of it.

Yes, there have been earlier reports of Blue Mountains sightings and there are plenty today as well.

I was reminded recently of the early day reports, including footprints which boggle the mind for size. I was talking to a Walla Walla friend, Gordon Bateman, as we shared some General Custer historical trivia. Then, having just read a Bigfoot account of mine, he asked if I wanted another story or two. I hurriedly responded: "Yes." Bateman's first account had to do with the time back in 1949 when he was in a party of deer hunters headed up the side of Griffin Peak near Dayton, Wash., one of the several mountains which ring the Mill Creek Watershed. This is prime Bigfoot territory, of course.

"We were near the top when we spotted this figure — like a man stooped over somewhat — in the brush off to my left," Bateman said. "I put my scoped rifle up and determined it was not a deer or an elk, so we just called it a wolf and went on. I don't think there were any wolves around here by 1949, but we weren't thinking in terms of Bigfoot those days. I think that's what it might have been, though."

Then, Bateman gave me the most interesting item for my Bigfoot records.



His mother, Fern Corbett Bateman, had come West to Huntsville, Wash. (a few miles east of Walla Walla on U. S. Highway 12) in 1892. Her father had bought the old flour mill there.

"One day in 1900 she went out to the garden behind the house (near the Touchet River and foothills of the Blue Mountains)," Bateman related. "Then, she sees this big, hairy man-like creature standing, with one leg perched on the gate. She screamed and took off for the house."

The Bigfoot ran off, too, he added.

And that account makes the earliest report of a Bigfoot encounter in the Blue Mountains.

According to my records, at least.

The earliest information about Bigfoot I'd gathered prior to Bateman's story was of track sightings early in the '40s.

That concerned the story of Jim Ralph, retired Forest Service employee. In 1942 he was assigned to lookout duty at Hoodoo Lookout on the Walla Walla Ranger District. After spending the daylight hours in the lookout tower, Ralph would come down to spend the night in a log cabin at the base. One night after retiring he had the sensation someone was looking in his window. Checking outside he could see nobody so went back to bed.

The next morning there was a set of huge footprints, toes pointing toward his window, when he arose!

Ralph recalls he followed the tracks leading away from the cabin for several blocks but had to return to duty in the tower.

He says he covered the two tracks at the window

with a washtub until his boss came up from headquarters.

"He asked me what I was going to do about them," Ralph said. "I told him he was the boss and it was up to him. That's the last I ever heard of it, though."

## CHAPTER 7

Although Bigfoot's presence in the Blue Mountains has been a matter of record — or certainly of recollections — for most of this century, the 1982 Freeman "close encounter" certainly made Bigfoot a modern-day factor with which to reckon.

And, it had been reckoned with, too, in the form of actual sightings of the creature and finding of thousands of tracks of not one, but several Bigfoots!

Yes, the creature was to become more and more a reality of life for the Blue Mountains (and recognized by more and more) as the 1982-92 decade unraveled.

While we had a lag of sorts in Bigfoot reports for a year or so after 1982, hardly a year has passed since then that there has not come some evidence, incident or sighting. These reports by hunters, anglers and hikers and campers and wood gatherers usually find their way to a member of an informal Bigfoot group in Walla Walla. Mainstay members are people like Roger Thornton, Nellie Jackson, Wes and Swede Sumerlin, Paul Freeman, Dave Been and myself. Often as not, the home of Wes Sumerlin on the outskirts of Walla Walla is the

mecca of those who have seen something unusual or smacks of Bigfoot in some fashion. This isn't so unusual as Wes has been all his life a tracker and packer of big game and lost people in the Blues. His reputation and knowledge of the Blue Mountains is almost legendary and well known by many.

Other members of the Bigfoot group, which meets only occasionally, but keep in touch with each other, have also acquired a lot of knowledge about Bigfoot and the Blues.

Typical was the time when Wes and I were guests on Walla Walla radio station KNSN's talk show. We discussed Bigfoot at length, that being the host's plan, of course. Wes got a phone call that night from a resident in the Blue Mountain foothills just a few miles from Walla Walla. He verified things Wes and I had discussed about Bigfoot on the radio.

"The other night my dog was raising hell outside," the caller said. "Ordinarily, I could go to the door, tell him to shut up and and he'd do it. This time he was clawing the door to get in and when I opened the door he bounded in and I could hear the other dogs in the neighborhood, all raising hell, too. The neighbor's ducks and geese were doing the same thing."

Another caller said his son and a friend were on a mountain road in the winter of 89-90 "when some two-legged animal bounded down a bank in front of them and then over another bank — they got the hell out of there real fast." In still another report Wes had a resident of the foothills country out of Walla Walla tell that on two occasions he has

seen Bigfoots on the hillside, just standing by a pine tree, looking down at the cars going by on the lonely mountain road below him.

If reports of Bigfoot activity in the Blues had slowed down any in the first year or two after Freeman's '82 encounter, they really began picking up in 1987. And hair was the exciting news!

It was new evidence of Bigfoot's presence.

Certainly it was a type of hair which could not be explained!

It didn't come from any beast which roamed the Blues, that seemed apparent.

Unless it came from the two-legged giant who has taken a liking to our mountains!

The hair showed up when Freeman was quoted at length in the Walla Walla "Union-Bulletin" concerning a find of tracks he'd come across in April 1987.

"Those guys (Bigfoots) are really traveling around; they're sure tearing up the ground up there," Freeman told the U-B reporter. He detailed his findings of tracks, in the same vicinity as that he'd encountered one in 1982.

But, this time, there was something different: hair.

"The important thing (about the finding of tracks) was the hair samples I got," Freeman added. He said the line of Bigfoot tracks ran for some three-fourths of a mile in the vicinity of where he'd seen the Bigfoot back in '82. This is some 20 miles southeast of town.

Shortly after his finding, Freeman contacted WSU anthropologist, Grover Krantz, who came

from Pullman, Wash., to make plaster casts of the tracks and to gather hair samples at the scene.

"These tracks are some of the better ones I've seen," Krantz told the U-B reporter. "I would call it a fairly important finding."

The WSU professor was also adamant about his views of Bigfoot.

"It is not strong enough to say I 'believe' there is a Bigfoot," Krantz said. "I have seen evidence that cannot be explained any other way."

Krantz further noted that tracks found in the Blues indicates as many as four of the animals living in the Walla Walla area of the Blue Mountains.

One of the footprint casts made of these findings measured 17 inches long by nine inches wide.

Then, Greg May, who now teaches outdoor survival classes at WSU, and is considered an expert tracker, showed up to check out these latest Freeman prints and hair samples he'd found.

At this time, May headed up an organization called "Bigfoot Expedition," called by May "the only scientifically based organization working on discovery of the animal."

It was May who declared that one of the prints found in this sighting was "from the same individual (Bigfoot) that Mr. Freeman sighted in 1982."

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Freeman was understandably quite excited with the prospects of learning the source of the many hair samples he'd found. He was also excited about the other odd items he turned up in his steady, unrelenting and unwavering search for the evidence that such a creature truly existed.

And probably was to be found in goodly numbers.

Krantz, of course, has estimated as many as 2,000 or more Bigfoots could be residents of the Northwest!

But, to learn from whence had come the hair he'd found, Freeman sought out the local experts on hair: the cosmetology department at Walla Walla Community College. Here's my U-B column which covered that episode of the Bigfoot of the Blues:

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The wisps of hair, long and finer than that from many animals, might not have drawn much attention of most people.

But, to Paul Freeman, who claims to have seen a Bigfoot in the Blue Mountains while on watershed patrol, those hairs possibly indicated evidence of what he had seen in 1982 on an abandoned logging road high up Tiger Canyon out of Mill Creek.

For, near the young pine sapling, snapped off as if by a hand more powerful than his own, was a long line of giant-sized footprints in the spring softness of the trail. The hairs were found on the saplings. Other hair was found high up on the bark of an old fir tree snag alongside the same trail.

This was last spring, early in the year when so much was seen of Bigfoot evidence. This showed up in '87 in the form of not only an abundance of footprints in several locations of the northern Blues, but also these hair findings, unexplained fecal droppings, the hefty green saplings snapped off in a line as if to mark a territory and the marks

high above a tall man's head, indicating rubbing by a shoulder and scrapings not like any known animal's.

So, the hair was tangible evidence one could pack off and examine at leisure.

Suiting that to action, Freeman and I took ourselves to the labs of Walla Walla Community College's cosmetology department, headed by Mildred Harvey. She was soon having the hair placed into the hair-examining equipment and a greatly enlarged view of the hair shown on the "TV screen" of the equipment. Human hair (from one of us) also was shown.

The two hair samples bore no resemblance as they were shown in color enlargement (and enhancement) on the 25-inch TV screen.

While the two hair types puzzled us, we understood not enough to hang much on, so prevailed upon Harvey to send the samples to the Redken Laboratories for testing by their hair experts.

What was learned at the lab has been received here recently.

Excerpts from the examiner's letter follow:

"The hair is different from any I've ever looked at in my 25 years of hair analyzing. Since I do not have a 'Big Foot' comparison - and as you advised, he isn't available for interview - all I can tell you is that it IS hair, but it is not completely human or animal. I've never seen hair of this nature!

"Most of the hair fibers were fractured (as in photo No. 1). Also note the even, almost fluid-like appearance of the medullary canal in photo No. 2.

The green retardation of color is also something I've never seen. All human or animal hair will retard yellow and magenta regardless of condition. All the hairs I looked at (20) were this shade of green.

"The only other possibility is that the hair was human and a chemical process was applied, then dyed with a very strong chemical before being made into a wig. But, again, I have looked at lots of wig hair through the years and this shade of green has never been seen by me and when hair is chemically processed for wig making, the medulla is completely destroyed or diffused in the process.

"This hair still has a very different medullary structure.

"The mystery still lives."

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In the next day's mail (following receipt by Mildred Harvey of the Redken report) there was an allied item in the "Bigfoot Co-op," a quarterly publication which disseminates news of the Bigfoot phenomena. In the issue was more on the matter of hairs which possibly have come from a Bigfoot.

When the finding of hair samples was reported in the October issue, an editor wondered "why there has been no analysis, etc."

This query was answered by a Malibu, Calif., reader, Erick Beckjord, in the current (December) issue, who wrote:

"You asked why all hair samples have not been compared to each other and what does the analysis show: The answer is: they have been compared by Project Bigfoot, back in 1978-79 and the results



were reported in 'Frontiers of Science' magazine, April, 1981.

"Four samples from Washington, Oregon, California and Maryland were compared with 84 samples of North American land mammals and six major higher primates, including man. The results are:

"A. Four samples matched each other.

"B. Five others submitted by various researchers did not.

"C. Of the four, they did not match any of the 84 mammals.

"D. They did not match any of the primate samples, however, they were slightly similar to gorilla, but not gorilla.

"E. (They) were judged to be of a higher primate of unknown type.

"F. Tests were done by a staff member from the Wyoming Fish and Game Lab and by two anthropologists from the University of Maryland who do work for the FBI and other government agencies.

"G. One sample had blood with it and this was found to be of higher primate origin by Dr. Vincent Sarich, University of California at Berkeley, famous for his blood sample analysis work on primates."

— — —

This hair thing was to crop up again in the years ahead. Often the hairs were found in young fir and pine trees, snapped off or bent, usually several feet above the ground at least head-high to the average man.

Hair was found in instances reported by Sheryl

Jenkins of St. John, Wash. She and husband, Mike, lease a cabin in the Blue Mountains on the border of the Mill Creek Watershed. The cabin is in an area reached by a primitive roadway, usually driven only by four-wheel drive rigs.

Sheryl Jenkins is one of the most unusual Bigfoot personages in Blue Mountain country.

She has seen four Bigfoots on three occasions!

She has a philosophy about Bigfoot well worth a close look. She tells about this special Bigfoot view point or feeling in the following excerpt from a June, 1992, letter I received from her:

"I do feel confident in myself now, as far as ability to recognize them (Bigfoots) when sighted. I do believe that if people could learn what they look like in the wild they could and would see them a whole lot more. Sasquatch live 24 hours a day, seven days a week and 365 days a year. They aren't invisible and they aren't in areas where there are no people all the time. "The first time (to see one) I was incredulous. The second time I believed, yet I had to think about it, to be 'sure' for awhile. This time (the third experience) I had no doubts; I KNEW with no doubts what I saw.

"It's just like learning to spot deer, elk, bear or cougars in the wild; learning what they look like. Maybe, also expecting that they are there, and not being so surprised to see one. It's more natural, instead of thinking of it as a myth.

"Which, until you believe, is exactly what they are."

Sheryl Jenkins had her first Bigfoot encounter in September, 1987. She thinks she was followed

by a Bigfoot on Sept. 19 and then, the next day, Sept. 20, she saw her first Bigfoot. The two-day horseback ride and Bigfoot experience was reported by her in an informal newsletter she mails to friends.

She reports in the opening lines that she trailered the two horses owned by her and Mike into the isolated cabin to meet friends who wanted to ride the area. It was to be a combination exploratory, hunting and sight-seeing trip for all. For her guests (Roger, her farrier, and his friend) it was a first time to the area. Because of the finding in April of many Bigfoot tracks fairly close to where they were to ride, the Jenkinses had heard of the possible presence of Bigfoot, she notes.

Her account follows:

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We had heard since early May that we were in Bigfoot country and had heard similar rumors for the six years we had leased the cabin. We weren't sure what to think then but I'll tell you now that he is REAL and Bigfoot does exist!

We rode the trail (from their cabin) to Lewis Peak, a distance of some four miles. Roger, my horse-shoer, has spent even more time in the Blue Mountains than I have and he trains horses on the side and knows more about them, although I have logged about 10,000 miles of riding horses. I have spent a lot of time in the woods so I'm used to running into bears and cougars -

not often, of course, but I have and I know the reaction of horses to bears and cougars.

There has been a lot of "sign" this year, possibly

Bigfoot, things like trees up to six inches through being twisted until they break off, and up to seven to 10 feet in the air. Not bent over but twisted until they break, then another twist till it breaks about a foot or so higher. I have never before seen anything like this, but have seen a lot of it this year and twice before I'd seen prints I felt were made by a Bigfoot, but I didn't say much to anyone but Mike.

On our way back from Lewis Peak, Roger asked to stop as he'd seen something in a twisted, short tree, one of the several we'd spotted on the way up to Lewis Peak. He found some white hairs, almost opaque. They looked like some brown ones that I had found earlier in the year. Mike had met some long-time Bigfoot hunters, guys who have been hunting it for years, and they told him that it was Bigfoot hair and that WSU had had some analyzed and the lab sent it back as "species unknown."

Anyway, while we were checking this short tree, the horses "spooked" and we remounted and moved out in a hurry. We proceeded at a fast walk but the horses got progressively more scared. I've never had horses act like that. They were just plain scared, like something was following us and whatever it was, the horses feared it was gaining!

After about a mile we switched to the road. The horses were still scared. We had the distinct "feeling" we were being followed by Bigfoot and nothing else. It was an eerie, terrifying thought ... but, if it were not for the horses, we wouldn't have known.

What surprised me was that both the men

admitted to being scared, too! And, these guys aren't the "chicken" type.

Roger said he'd never had horses act like that either. The next morning, they were scheduled to go riding with me again, but they left for home, early, instead.

I decided, "Shoot, we must be imagining it (Bigfoot following them the day before) so I decided to ride back. I did and what I found scared the heck out of me even more. I found more hair, that wasn't there the day before, in a twisted tree, at breast level on me sitting on my horse, Tiger.

Then the other horse, Star, riderless and accompanying Tiger and I, did something unprecedented in the eight years I've owned her. I was riding Star the day before, so I know her reactions after eight years in the woods. She went through a single-strand barbed wire fence, instead of going up the trail, when we reached where we were the day before. She's never done anything like that. And, I had gone all that summer, riding one of the horses and letting the other run loose if I was riding alone and never had any problems. But, she did not want to go back up that trail. Tiger was reluctant, too, but not as much. I had to catch Star, put on a lead rope and then go ahead.

From the point where we had joined the road from the trail there were giant footprints in the trail until about one-fourth mile beyond where the horses got startled. It was at this point that I saw "something" standing next to a tall tree on an open slope. I couldn't figure what it was, but it was huge. It was brown, with long, thick, defined legs, but I

couldn't see a head. It seemed far bigger than any elk, deer or bear, standing upright.

It didn't register till later what I'd seen.

I rode to Lewis Peak, then turned as if to go to Table Rock (a 32-mile ride). The horses normally get a bit balky at this point as they don't like that long of a rugged mountain ride.

But, today, they all of a sudden broke into a trot, having to be restrained to keep from racing away, and on a trail I normally have to prod them to keep going at a walk. They wanted out of there. I almost felt sorry for them. I had to turn them around to go back — it was the only way through there — and got to the open meadow where I had seen "something" off to the side. I decided to calm myself and look. Boy! That was no calming affect! There, beside the tree was the most perfect imprint of a big foot in the grass that I have ever seen and my horse was very eager to get going!

Star had deserted us long ago, although at this point in other rides the horses would like to linger here for some of the good grass. Tiger wanted to rear and follow Star. I restrained her long enough to go to the other side of the tree and there I found imprints of one large Bigfoot and a track of a smaller one, where they had sat while the other laid down. I left, going at a trot, trying to examine trees en route but Tiger was furious at the restrained walk but I refused to totally "spook," although I was plenty scared. I kept looking back at that open slope and the last time I could still see something standing by the tree.

I'd had enough. I got the horses loaded and left

for home! It took me three weeks to get my courage up to go back to the cabin.

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Following this initial Bigfoot encounter, Sheryl conferred with Grover Krantz of WSU and several of his anthropological students, all of whom had been on the scene many times to investigate reports of Bigfoot activity. In spite of lengthy quizzing sessions by the anthropologists, Sheryl was unwavering in her story. All were convinced she had truly seen a Bigfoot.

Out of the intensive investigation by Krantz and students of the area near the Jenkins cabin, some interesting statistics were revealed to Sheryl and her husband, Mike.

"The have plaster casts (with dermal ridges) of six different Bigfoots in our area!" she said. "Their explanation for the extensive signs and sightings this year (I was the third person to see a Bigfoot there in a three-week period) is that a second Bigfoot male has moved into the area from somewhere else, along with a smaller one.

"The scientists figure a family of a four has been there for a long time. One is a male with a 14-inch foot, three females, two of adult age and one very aged. This year, they have the signs of a new one, a male with a 17-inch foot and a young one of about 200 pounds. They figure that the male is about nine feet tall and weighs about 800 pounds or more. One of the female Bigfoot weighs around 500 pounds.

"They think the two male Bigfoots are having a territorial dispute, both saying it's their area and

arguing over the females. They also think one of the Bigfoots is an albino."

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Sheryl's report of her second encounter with a Bigfoot came in a letter to Krantz, telling of her seeing a Bigfoot in the vicinity of her cabin on May 27, 1990. This excerpt from her letter to Krantz:

"Just for your records, I sighted a Sasquatch again, this time on May 27, 1990, on a slope of Lewis Peak. It was a rainy day about two hours after dawn. I was out riding my two horses (riding one and leading one). I'd ridden from our cabin along the (Mill Creek) Watershed trail. "The Bigfoot was in an open meadow, just sitting. When I first noticed it, I was curious, again, because, as before, nothing belonged in that meadow like that, especially something so big — just like a very large animal but certainly no bear — not moving, just sitting there."

Sheryl said she tried to work her horse down closer to the object but because of the wet, slippery going, she decided not to and returned to her cabin as the rain began to pelt harder and harder.

Sheryl's most recent Bigfoot encounter came June 7, 1992.

Here's her account:

"When our company for the weekend at our cabin had departed, I took Caesar, a new horse of ours, out for a ride alone. We were going along the Watershed trail toward Lewis Peak. As we came to the exact place where I was kicked two years ago by a borrowed horse and was about one-fourth mile from where I sighted the Bigfoot the first time,



I looked to the descending ridge below me. There, I spotted a large brown-ish colored object that looked promising for a bear.

"But, Caesar fidgeted, wanting to return home.

"I kept watching and was about to leave as I realized the brown object of interest was far too big to be a bear. And then, I was shocked to see the object suddenly split into two tall, hair-covered animals walking upright on two feet.

"Sasquatch!"

"But, there was one, on the left, walking over the edge, dropping from sight, the second descending slowly into the trees below, then dropping down over the far side out of view.

"The two Bigfoots didn't come back into view lower on the ridge, although I watched as much as possible while returning to the cabin."

## CHAPTER EIGHT

While the encounters related by Sheryl Jenkins have to rate high in our cataloging of Bigfoot sightings in the Blues, we'd be missing a lot if we didn't set down the "Sumerlin Sagas."

The family of Wes and Natalie (Peewee) Sumerlin has had many experiences with this Bigfoot and

his "family" which has been making the Blue Mountains home for many years.

The Sumerlins, who spend many days each summer in the Blues, consider the Bigfoots as a part of the broad spectrum presented by these mountains. They are merely part of the experience of enjoying the mountains, say the Sumerlins.

Probably the favorite portion of the Blues for the Sumerlins has been the Wenaha-Tucannon Wilderness Area, established in 1978. The trails around the perimeter of the Wilderness have also held their attractions, as have the camping sites on and off those trails.

Their attraction is likely due to the fact the camp grounds were once places favored by the Nez Perce Indians and other Indian tribes before the arrival of the white man, Wes tells me.

It's an area also made to order for the Bigfoot.

As we shall see before this book has been completely spun out!

Sumerlin himself has had an interest in Bigfoot since he was a child. For that matter, the creature was part of his rearing on the Colville Indian Reservation where he spent his childhood. He is part-Indian. The reservation is where he was taught the skills of tracking and staying alive in the wilds.

His involvement with the Bigfoot of the Blues came when he was running a mule pack string into the mountains here at age 14 and occasionally would come across the big footprints.

He says he tried public high school but when spring rolled around and the birds started cheeping and buds started bursting, the call (and freedoms!)

of the mountains proved too strong. Wes says he had to head for the hills.

With an uncle, he made his way back to the reservation some 50 miles out of Spokane. They rode the "blinds" of a passenger railroad train out of Walla Walla to Spokane, then hiked the final 50 miles!.

In a few years, Wes returned to Walla Walla, got a job, got married and began a lifelong tenure of packing, tracking animals and people and working for a farm implement dealer in Walla Walla.

His best of times, however, were those days when he could head for the Blues.

He does it yet, although the past three years he has been recovering from severe heart surgery. Wes and some friends were headed down the Wenaha River a few years ago checking out some "awful weird noises" a party of badly spooked hunters had reported to him. The hunters had been so badly shaken when they'd reached the isolated spot on the Wenaha River, and heard the noises, that they raced out of there in spite of its being nightfall and difficult terrain.

With Wes that day were W. C. "Stub" Gray, a long-time saddle partner on many rides, Larry Penland and a man he recalls only as Joe.

Stub, who always rode a mule, was saddled up and ready to head down the trail so struck out, with Joe following. Larry was slower getting rigged up so he and Wes came along a couple of minutes later, Wes recalls.

"They weren't over two-three minutes ahead of us," he added. "Suddenly as Larry and I rounded

a turn in the trail, we heard the goldangest noises and then saw Joe had been bucked off his horse and the horse was nowhere to be seen. Stub was hollering 'Whoa!' over and over. His mule had a leg caught in a limb on a tree and Stub was slowly sliding off the backside of the mule.

"And, all the time Joe is hollering and stuttering, 'I saw-saw-saw ... over on a log-log-log.' He kept saying this over and over, so Joe went over to the log he was pointing at. There, he found imprints that looked like two big guys had been sitting there and the parts of fresh trout on the ground looked like they'd been sitting there eating the fish as Stub and Joe rode into them."

Just as evidently, two Bigfoots, judging by the big tracks near the log, Wes says.

"One set of Bigfoot tracks went off to the river and soon we heard, then saw, him flopping around in the boggy bottom of the stream. He was in trouble because we'd roped elk out of there that had got stuck. But, he muscled on out and into the main stream, fell down twice and was soon heading up the other side to a meadow on a shelf above the river.

"The Bigfoot would turn ... did it three times as it went up the hillside ... and look down at us. I could see the muscles in its legs rippling and see its blue-black hair, a real shiny blue-black it was.

"And Stub, he kept shouting: 'It's a wild man! It's a wild man!'

"The last we saw of that one, it had reached the meadow and lay down. Larry had spotted the second one, over on the other hillside, just sitting

there, in the brush, watching us."

Wes and his party, recovering their mounts and getting the mule free of the tree, went on downstream to check out the area where the hunters had reported the noises. Not finding anything unusual — and figuring the source of the noises might well have been the Bigfoot twosome they'd run into eating trout, they headed back to camp.

When they came back to the scene of the "rodeo" they could see where the second Bigfoot had come out of hiding. His tracks showed up as it walked down the trail and headed over to meet up with the "blue-black" creature. Incidentally, "Blue-black" is the name Wes has known this one by for many years and says he has seen it on more than one occasion. Two others with which he has had several meetings he has also named, a female he calls the "Buckskin Female" and a huge Bigfoot he calls "Big Jim," one he has known of since 1962.

Wes had heart surgery about three years ago and was on his initial recovery period when he and his wife, Peewee, took their two great-grand daughters for a picnic ride.

"It was an opportunity to teach them a little more about tracking," he says. "Both of them, Tommie and Danielle, have taken to it like ducks to water."

"Must be in the genes," I joked with him.

It was Tommie who asked Wes to stop the car as they slowly tooled up the mountain road that day.

"Stop, Grampa, there's something by that tree," said Tommie.

"Sure enough, there was a Bigfoot track by the tree, I could see as I backed the car up and stopped it. And, the two girls were out of the car and scrambling around and soon were out of sight in spite of my telling them to stay close."

Wes says he himself scrambled around and soon found the tracks of the little girls.

"With Bigfoot tracks covering their tracks," he says.

"Well, both Grampa and Grandma got to stewing about then and especially as I could sense something was in the brush. We got the girls and got them into the car and headed on our way. As we drove off I could hear sounds as if someone were crying — you know, like a kid would when they have a friend or favorite toy taken away from them."

That same sobbing sound was heard another time by the Sumerlins.

They were camped at Timothy Camp Grounds, a popular campsite and a trailhead and jumpoff point into the Wenaha-Tucannon Wilderness Area. It's truly a great "oasis" in the rugged country back there.

"We got there in the afternoon, but too late to head on down the trail to Milk Creek, about six miles away on the Wenaha South Fork," Wes recalls. "So, with time to kill, the kids got to kicking around a soccer ball in the open area.

"Someone kicked the ball too hard and it sailed off into the brush.

"Just as suddenly, the ball came flying back. Stub and I both wondered if there was someone else out there. Then, a second time the ball was

kicked into the brush.

"Then, 'whap!' out it came, seemingly kicked with terrific force.

"Must be a real big kid to kick a ball so hard," Stub said.

"Well, about then, some parents came and gathered up kids and their ball and left.

"And it was then that I heard that sobbing sound again and for about a half hour before it died out, the same sound as when I gathered up the girls and left where they had been playing when Tommie spotted that track."

Furthermore, the Bigfoot that day quite likely was the "Buckskin Female," as her track showed up, Wes notes. It's an unusual footprint, one which looks like the foot had been injured or deformed at some time.

"It's the same track which has showed up in Central Washington, British Columbia and California," Wes says. "Then, in 1986, we found the same track where a Bigfoot had been raiding our winter fur trapline on Mill Creek."

Wes says he developed a close affinity apparently, for the Bigfoots and on occasion fed them candy bars, left at night for them at camp.

"We'd camp at a spot and in two or three days they'd be likely to show up. They smelled our camp and could tell it was me by the color of my horses. I've used paint horses for the past 50 years up in the mountains. I think they recognized them."

Sumerlin relates an oddity about the Bigfoot that poses some problems for some of his listeners, but it is akin to Bigfoot we'll discuss later on in this

book.

When asked how close has he been to a Bigfoot, Wes responds by recalling how he and a friend had been within 50 feet or less to the Buckskin Female one day.

"When she turned to look my way, she was real visible and so were her breasts, so I knew it was a female," Wes recalls. Wes claims that if two people "work" a Bigfoot, the animal will go from one to the other but if you get too close, then the creature will suddenly "just disappear," he claims.

His answers to what he believes a Bigfoot is are also interesting.

"It's just something that wants to be friendly, but the trouble has been that when one comes in I've usually been on a horse and at this point, the horses always just go ape!

"Of course, when this happens, you have to go with your horse.

"Some day, I've said a dozen times, I'm going to tie up the horse and go on ahead on foot and see what happens."

Wes also will argue with me when I aver that a Bigfoot is "only an animal, like a cougar or a bear, except he walks upright on two legs like a man."

"No, I think he's far more intelligent than other animals," Wes says. "He has a face something like a human but it isn't exactly a human face, either."

Then, when I further argue that Bigfoot never makes a permanent home nor uses fire or tools, Wes will put on his thinking cap and recall an experience.

"It was in this cave, in a really isolated part of the



Blues, I found a bed of boughs and grasses, evidently packed in from a meadow nearby. It was about four feet wide and nine feet long. I found a handful of hair and gave it to a guy to try to test, but the only thing I ever heard was the hair never compared with anything they knew of."

He admits he is more "organized" today in the search for Bigfoot.

"But, hell, back in those days, we learned to just get along with it, because it sure was willing to get along with us."

Today, as he works with an informal "team" of Bigfoot buffs, or on his traditional family outings, Wes Sumerlin continues to hold to this philosophy.

*A Sumerlin grandson experienced Bigfoot in the summer of 1990 in a way he won't soon forget. Here's my column in the Waitsburg "Times" which related the incident:*

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**THE TRACKER TRACKED** — "It was the first time I was ever tracked while I was tracking," says "Ray-Ray" Sumerlin, as the Bigfoot experience of his family this summer is recalled.

Timothy Meadow is a favorite place for a lot of Touchet Valley and Walla Walla Valley people who love an outdoors experience.

A former forest service camping facility with an outdoor kitchen, lean-to stable for horses and a watering trough, the site continues to be a service point for the Walla Walla ranger of the Umatilla National Forest. As a campgrounds, it remains a favored place in the Blue Mountains for many although the comforts mentioned above no longer

exist. It has in the past been a place felt to be a home base for one or more Bigfoots. A recent family outing indicates a firming up for this belief.

The site, some 40 road miles from Walla Walla (20 miles is a primitive roadway) remains a favored place for the family of Wes and Natalie Sumerlin of Walla Walla. The Sumerlins have been going to Timothy for many years, pitching their tents for children and grandchildren and tethering their horses for a week-long stay. While all such visits have been pleasant ones, the trip in August proved a bit unusual with an experience none will forget.

Especially Ray-Ray Sumerlin, a grandson of Wes and Natalie. He is called "Ray-Ray" because his father's name is also Ray.

While he is 27, Ray-Ray retains a lot of the fun-loving mischief of his teen-aged brothers. He was in such a mood one day when he arrived at the Timothy campsite to learn his brother, Jonathan, his brother-in-law, Andy, and a friend, Ryan, had left camp to "do some exploring" a couple of miles or so away, down the south fork of the Wenaha River, only a trickle where it starts at Timothy Meadow.

Heading down the trail, Ray-Ray soon spotted the trio and, in hiding, soon had their attention with a little shaking of tree limbs and making sounds. "I had 'em a little spooked all right," Ray-Ray says. "So, I worked my way around them and soon was closer, stomped my feet and got them riled up some more. Then, I made myself known and we had a few laughs and I headed back to camp."

Ray-Ray hadn't been back in camp very long when the other three — who had made a circuitous loop back, seeking to thwart another scare tactic by Ray-Ray — came rushing into camp, all of them out of breath and gasping out a strange story of the "big, hairy man."

"Grampa, we saw this big hairy man going through the bushes, not running, just like it was gliding ..." rambled a nearly incoherent Jonathan.

Wes and his son, Ray Sr., saddled up some of the horses and a party of nine headed down to try to locate what the boys had seen. "You could follow Ray-Ray's tracks real easy by the formation of his sneaker shoe soles," Wes said, "and pretty soon we reached the stream and on this side of it found several tracks, big ones where something had walked through and on out of the water. There weren't any on the other side because it was rocky and steeper."

And, the big tracks were superimposed over the sneaker tracks of Ray-Ray!

Wes took a photograph of the plainest track of several at the stream, then the party moved on up the trail to higher, dryer ground. Here, another print was found, but not so plain, it being in the harder earth. Near this one, Wes' wife, Natalie, spotted a faint trail of sorts leading off from the main trail, so followed it. She came across an even more startling discovery.

"Something real big had laid there and not too long before we got there," Wes said. "You could squat down in the grass and even see the grass blades straightening up after having been flattened

out. Whatever had done that flattening hadn't been there much more than a half hour before."

Wes said he theorizes that a Bigfoot had been there, spotted Ray-Ray on the hillside above him, then had departed when he saw the three youths coming near his hiding place. It was then that the boys saw the Bigfoot scurrying away.

Needless to say, the entire incident proved exciting campfire conversation that night before everyone rolled into their sleeping bags.

Getting to sleep proved a bit of a chore, too.

"That night," said Wes, "we heard some of the strangest sounds...the like of which I've never heard in my life in those mountains."

Wes, part Indian and a retired big game packer, has spent most of his life in the Blue Mountains.

For his grandson, Ray-Ray, the experience is one he won't forget. "Gad, while I was tracking my brothers, a Bigfoot was tracking me, it looks like," he said.

"Apparently, it was only a few yards away from me just watching me, while I was trying to fool my brothers! Wow!

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*Here's a little Bigfoot tidbit, which came with the same column:*

AND, CLOSER TO HOME — You might say Bob Patton of Walla Walla is now a believer.

In Bigfoot, that is.

It happened a week or so ago on Lewis Peak, up near the end of the road and where you can look

down into the Green Fork...

Patton loves the Blue Mountains and especially this part of them and spends a lot of time up there. He has a cabin down the road a piece from where he got this "conversion" of which we speak.

Seems Patton was meandering along in his rig when he spotted the track in the dust at the side of the road. Thinking it was a fresh bear track, Patton pulled up and went back for a closer look.

When he got there and looked at the track, all he said (at first) was "Wow!"

It sure wasn't any bear track, he adds.

"I could put both my hands inside the track," Patton avers.

His hands aren't any dainty affairs, either.

Patton says the huge track measured some seven inches across and was about 17 inches long.

About four feet away from it was an indentation in the ground that apparently was a second step made by whatever made the track. Patton says he "used to hear the stories from different people who said they had seen things like this or the real thing and I never was sure of what to believe. But, I believe in keeping an open mind. I'm a believer, now, though."

Coming across a footprint that size ... a lot of miles from anywhere ... could well make a believer in Bigfoot out of anyone!

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*An Oregon man who loves the Blue Mountains almost gave up on his favorite outdoors place in 1988 after a jarring experience that year. This account in my Waitsburg "Times" column relates the story:*

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TWO SETS OF BIGFOOT TRACKS  
FOUND IN ONE DAY

There are some who are convinced that one or more Bigfoots make the Blue Mountains near Walla Walla a permanent home.

Others are just as certain "they are just moving through here."

Dutch Jennings is a horse packer who loves to spend a few days every once in a while in the Blue Mountains, tenting and horsebacking around the high places and into the deep canyons. He makes his home on the Oregon coast but for many years has taken time out each summer for such a mountain trip.

He was up there again this fall, camping at Squaw Spring on the Kendall Skyline Road a few miles from the junction of the Tiger Canyon Road with the Skyline. It was his first visit to the Blues in three years. Three years ago, Jennings had a bad experience that jolted his hankering about camping in the high country.

Three years ago, on a pack-in trip, one of his horses had its tail ripped out one hectic night by something as yet unexplained.

Jennings was back this year, though, but each night in his solitary camp, he slept with a loaded revolver at hand, he told a pair of Walla Walla friends, Wes Sumerlin and his brother, Swede Sumerlin. Riding down the trail from Squaw Spring a short distance — "a half hour of riding," Wes says — the trio came across a log about 40 feet long and a foot thick.

"That wasn't there two days ago," Jennings declared. "It was over here six feet or so. Something or someone has picked it up to get at grubs or the big carpenter ants."

Evidence of what the "something" was came when the men spotted a solitary footprint, measuring an estimated 14 inches long and seven inches at its widest point. There were other indications of "knee" prints and other prints which might have been the ball of a foot or the heel only.

"It looked like the critter had picked up the log and tossed it to one side, then got on the ground to scoop up ants or grubs," Wes Sumerlin says. "The one track had a definite instep to it, also."

Later that day, Wes and Swede made their way home, after leaving Jennings at his camp. They were jolted when they came across several tracks, made since they had been that way earlier in the day.

"Those tracks were made just a while ago," shouted Swede. "They weren't there this morning and the dust from passing cars hasn't settled much in them."

The tracks, about the same size as those found by the log earlier and several miles higher elevation, came down the hillside, crossed the roadway and disappeared in the brush on the other side, Wes Sumerlin says. "They were spaced about 50 inches apart and running in a line, fairly well one right behind the other," he added.

While he didn't have a camera or plaster of Paris, Wes says he'd guess the tracks were "very likely

made by the same critter that made those higher up."

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And, all of this was to be but a prelude to what happened in January, 1991. That was truly the "mother" of all Bigfoot track sightings!

## CHAPTER 9

While the so-called "mother" of all Bigfoot track sightings was to show up in 1991, there were some exciting things on the Blue Mountains agenda as the 80s rolled out their course.

These included the filming of a Bigfoot documentary in 1987 by ABC-TV's "Good Morning America," photographs made in 1988 of a Bigfoot by Duane Freeman, son of Paul Freeman, and a find of unique rocks by the same father-son team in 1990.

Oddly enough, while those rocks bore interesting pictographs or "Indian writing," some of the art work on the rocks had a remarkable resemblance to a Bigfoot!

In this same time frame there was the change in Bigfoot-seeking philosophy on the part of Paul Freeman, of all the big-time Bigfoot hunters then devoting the most time in this search.

And, possibly that facet of this whole Bigfoot saga was the really big one as the 1982-92 decade of the saga reeled out to a conclusion.

Among his fellow Bigfoot seekers there has ranged a wide diversity of opinions about the creature, what it was and what it was all about. It



was a range from that of WSU anthropologist Grover Krantz who felt that killing one was the only way to obtain proof. This was a belief held by Freeman from the time he saw the first one and began drawing ridicule for his reporting the first sighting.

He plain was "going to kill one."

The range of feelings about Bigfoot went from the "live and let live" philosophy of long-time Blue Mountains resident, Wes Sumerlin. "I believe the Bigfoots would like to communicate with humans," Sumerlin said on many occasions. "I think it's just an animal that wants to be friendly."

Rene Dahinden, a Richmond, B.C., Bigfoot researcher for about 40 years, has never seen a Bigfoot, but has delved into a host of sightings and activity up and down the Pacific Coast and over to Russia and China.

But, he hopes some day to fulfill the desire to see one.

"Seeing a Sasquatch once in your lifetime is all anyone can ask for," Dahinden told Portland "Oregonian" reporter Dick Cockle, in 1987.

He further added: "I don't know if I would believe it (if he saw a Bigfoot). You still wonder if there is anything out there."

This, if course, is not an opinion shared by Krantz, long convinced that truly "there has to be something out there," an opinion largely based on the sizable amount of evidence favoring such a conclusion.

Another Walla Wallan, the late Dick Bradford, trapped for furs for a half century in the Blue

Mountains. He told me that he had "never seen a Bigfoot, but everyone who sees it says it is the most unusual thing of their life."

Bradford's closest encounter came one day while running a trapline on Mill Creek above Walla Walla a few miles. He'd left his wife, who accompanied him that day, seated on a log to await his return. When he got back, he found her "a little excited and telling me she had felt the presence of 'something' in the brush nearby while I was gone."

Dick told me he couldn't explain the "feeling" experienced by his wife that day.

Also unexplained was the huge boulder, about four feet in diameter, to which Dick had wired a trap the day before.

"Something had lifted the boulder and threw it about 30 feet to one side," he said.

That "something" very possibly was the cause of his wife's uneasiness over having "felt" a presence nearby, he added.

Freeman was still toting a high-powered rifle in 1987 when ABC's camera crew showed up to film the documentary footage in the Blues. He was also still feeling strongly about the ridicule and rebukes after his '82 encounter. He was fiercely determined to "get" a Bigfoot, even if it meant shooting one.

"There's only one way to prove the creature's existence," Freeman told Cockle in October of 1987. "I'm going to shoot one," he said. "I don't care who likes it or don't; I'm gonna do it — you've got to have a body or a specimen to say: 'This is a Sasquatch.'"

By the end of a year's time, that attitude had

changed.

Freeman had left his rifle at home and was instead, packing a movie camera. Later, he'd start using a video camcorder.

He was toting an old movie camera that day in 1988 when his son captured some photos of a Bigfoot with a 35-mm camera.

The Walla Walla "Union-Bulletin" carried color photos on page 1 on Oct. 7, 1988. A dark object looms up in the brush as it walked away from the Freemans. The shots were taken near the border of the watershed, where several other tracks and sightings of the Bigfoot have been recorded by Freeman and others.

At the time, Freeman termed the pictures "the most significant yet."

"These pictures are great," he added. "I know that people have said all along: 'He's lying. There's nothing there.' But, I know what I saw. I know what my son took pictures of."

He said the Bigfoot was over seven feet tall and weighed around 600-700 pounds, had a bulky build and extremely long arms. Its hair was dark and the facial hair grayish.

There was no question about it; this photographic evidence of a Bigfoot was the high point of the late 80s for the Freemans.

This father-son team had another successful Blue Mountains sortie, though, and it possibly has a Bigfoot tie-in. Freeman is convinced it definitely has Bigfoot connotations.

Exploring a deep pocket of the Blue Mountains one day, the two men located an overhang which

created a cave of sorts, a shelter if you will. There was evidence the depression had served just that purpose, too, either as a permanent abode or at least temporary, Freeman figures.

The overhang of rocks and earth was about 30 feet wide and the men could go into it about 15 feet or so, Freeman recalls.

The biggest of several rocks they found there was ornamented with stick figures and other figures resembling the pictographs found and ascribed to ancient Indians. It was about 24 inches across and seven inches thick, probably weighing close to 200 pounds. The rock has on it what resembles a Bigfoot, shown walking away but with its head cocked as if peering back.

A smaller rock has a similar object on it, both "painted" there with black ashes or other material.

Other, smaller rocks in the collection are carved to resemble heads of persons.

Or, maybe a Bigfoot?

Lawrence Hussey, an anthropologist and archaeologist who teaches at Walla Walla Community College, was called to inspect the Freeman rocks. He said the rocks appear to be genuine American Indian artifacts, but he wouldn't speculate on their age.

Hussey, however, said he doubted the Indian artist intended to represent Bigfoot in his work with the rocks, either by carving or painting with primitive pigments.

He held the opinion that the painted "figure" was instead that of a gigantic hand.

Grover Krantz, contacted by the Oregonian's

Cockle, said Freeman's rock collection was "just something that cannot be evaluated."

The two Freemans, both hefty men, spent the best part of an entire day hauling their find from its cavern. "It took us all day to get it out," Freeman recalls. "It must have been around 9 p.m. by the time we got home. It came loose once and rolled back into a boggy area. We had to rig up a sling with poles to carry it out between us. It rubbed our shoulders raw and I was sore as hell for days afterward!"

Whether or not the unique rock curios turn out to be related to the Bigfoot of the Blues, they make an interesting bit of conjecture for this interesting subject.

Well, the 80s wound out their course and we're into the 90s and the "mother" of all track sightings is just around the corner. I thought when I talked to an ex-Forest Service ranger in Willow Creek, Calif., about his sighting of tracks that his sighting was sizable. The man had found several miles of Bigfoot tracks.

What that ranger found in northern California was to be equaled and then some by the miles of tracks we found coming out of the Blue Mountains in January of 1991.

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## CHAPTER 10

The snow had almost disappeared and it was raining lightly when Paul Freeman called me at noon, Jan. 14, 1991.

"What you doing? Want to go check on some bear tracks up Mill Creek?" he shouts.

"Well, I'm just taking five after lunch...what's up?" I responded.

"I heard of some so-called bear tracks crossing the road a ways up the creek and I called Wes (Sumerlin) and we're going up and check 'em out. You want to come along?"

"Yeah. Meet you at your place?"

"Right," Paul says and we hung up.

When I reached his house, Paul right away says: "There ain't no way those are bear tracks this time of year. A bear wouldn't be out of hibernation yet."

Well, when Wes showed up, he shot down this theory, by opining as how it could be the boar since the warming spell of the past few days could account for a bear coming out, at least the boar. The sow would still be in hibernation or caring for cubs born a few weeks before, he said.

Well, we weren't long in finding out. When we reached the farmhouse and the side road leading off the paved Mill Creek Road some eight miles east of Walla Walla, we pulled up and got out. We soon spotted a track in the wet, loamy soil of the edge of a wheat field on the left side of the road going up towards the mountains.

"Here's a couple," Paul shouted, and right away, Wes, who had walked over to the opposite side of the roadway, hollered, "I got some here, too."

On the wheat field side of the road, we followed tracks which might have been made three or four days earlier and possibly while the mud was still slightly frozen. These tracks measured 14- 15 inches long and were striding 42 inches to 48 inches apart. They were about five inches wide at the widest.

They weren't bear tracks because we failed to spot any toe nails and human-shaped toes, opposing heels, were plain to see at the end of most of the tracks.

The tracks could be seen coming from the direction of the nearby foothills, possibly having come down through a tree-filled copse through the fall-seeded wheat, alongside the fence line at the edge of the paved road, then across the road.

Where Wes had found tracks first, we could easily pick up the trail as the tracks went off the roadway, down a muddy slope to the farm road, down it to the now murky and swollen Mill Creek. The tracks ended here and turned back. I followed them until they disappeared at a cable strung across the roadway. Two tracks here, nearly side by side, were the last. Others apparently were in the grass and weeds matted along the roadway edge. As we drove home, Wes recalled how his brother, Swede, had given up running a trapline in this vicinity of Mill Creek a few years ago. For three years running, come January, he'd find his traps

traps robbed of catches so it didn't pay. After the third year, he even gave up trapping there at all.

What was the Bigfoot seeking (whose tracks we'd just seen)?

"Well, several of the farmers up and down Mill Creek have sheep or goats," Freeman offered.

"Yeah, and there's lots of deer around I saw several fresh tracks back there where we saw the Bigfoot tracks," Wes rejoined.

"I don't suppose a Bigfoot would be above eating a raccoon, either," I offered. "I saw a few 'coon tracks back there, too."

"Oh, a Bigfoot will eat anything, as far as I know," Freeman said.

Freeman told us he'd gotten onto the tracks report when he and his wife, Nancy, overheard a couple of guys at the restaurant that morning while they were having coffee.

"One was telling the other about having seen these 'bear' tracks and described right where he'd seen them," Paul said. "I didn't say anything until I got home and called you guys."

Wes feels certain the tracks are those of a Bigfoot he has named "Big Jim" for upwards of 20 years of sightings in the Blue Mountains. Wes for many years made his living as a trapper, big game packer and a tracker seeking missing persons.

"That's his track - I'm just certain," he said. "He has been seen in this area several times over the years. Three times he was seen up on that snow-covered space over across the creek from where we saw the tracks today."

While Wes and Paul scrutinized tracks here and there, I took several black-and-white photographs as the tracks lay out plainly in several places. They were especially clearly visible where the Bigfoot had seemingly gingerly made its way down the steep slope leading toward Mill Creek from the main road.

Scouters might be quick to point out the tracks were likely faked, being found so close to a well-traveled road.

If so, someone went to a heck of a lot of work, making an awful lot of tracks in some steep and slippery terrain at places.

That's the story I composed a few hours after taking the short ride up the Mill Creek road to the site of the many tracks some eight miles up from Wells Wells.

There is more to the story, however:

The next day, Freeman scouted around at higher elevations where he could reach by driving and by scanning hillsides with his binoculars.

"There are miles of tracks up here," he excitedly reported that night.

The following day, Sumnerlin and his brother, Swede, both good trappers and trackers, too, scouted out the terrain, starting again at the crossing eight miles up Mill Creek.

Wes and Swede combed a sizable chunk of the geography between the creek and Five Points, finding "thousands of tracks" in the seeded fields, in snow at the higher elevations and evidence of "an awful lot of moving around by someone or something."

The finds of so many tracks by the Sumnerlins and by

insert between pages 119 & 120



by Freeman have attracted many people since our locating the tracks at Mill Creek. Lots of people have been on the road and up in the mountain sections to see for themselves this unusual spectacle of the Blue Mountains. Huge man-like tracks such as these have been seen in the Blues before 1982 but it was in June of that year that Freeman came practically face-to-face with one of the seven-foot monsters known as Bigfoot or Sasquatch.

That sighting was only a few miles above where we spotted the tracks crossing Mill Creek, by the way. By last Sunday, many more spectators had been drawn to the tracks and a regular safari shaped up Sunday morning, including The former Portland "Oregonian" reporter-photographer team of Dick Cockle and Barbara Reynolds. These reporters had been following the Bigfoot affair in the Blues for several years but they were "pretty impressed" with what they saw. They were also somewhat astounded by some of the interviews with people there ... especially some who have farms and residences on the creek. Some reported livestock showing a preference to remaining closer to the house come nightfall or dogs showing an inclination to come indoors for the night, rather than remain outdoors with an element strange to their lives. This might only be bears coming out of hibernation, etc., but one wonders.

And, as to the good-sized tracks, measuring some 15 inches long and five inches wide and striding across the fields at a pace I measured at more than 40 inches for the several I used a tape

on — well, it's a heckuva lot of work just for someone trying to pull a hoax!

Now, that fact really boggles the minds of most who have seen the tracks.

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The above column in the Waitsburg "Times," although with far less circulation than of the Walla Walla daily, probably helped swell the visiting population to the scene of the tracks on Mill Creek!

Those tracks in the field, coming down from the Blue Mountains, drew thousands of people that first weekend. The adjacent plowed field with the many tracks was beaten down in a wide swath by the thousands of feet of the curious.

One track inspector came from St. Helens, Ore., some 275 miles west of Walla Walla. He was Jim Hewkin, a retired Oregon Wildlife Department employee. Hewkin spent a couple of hours at the Mill Creek end of the trackage, pronounced them faked and returned home!

In dubbing the tracks a hoax, Hewkin, in the minds of several other investigators, completely ignored the miles of the tracks, probably made in near-zero temperatures. His curt appraisal flew at odds with those of veteran trackers and other experts in the Bigfoot and tracking fields.

Hewkin even went to the trouble of airing his opinion in Vol. 9 (issued Sept. 1991) of "Cryptozoology," the inter-disciplinary journal of the International Society of Cryptozoology (ISC). His comments, in part, are from the ISC publication:

"At a wire-fence crossing, I noted a track under the wire — exactly where I would have placed my

own foot when crossing over. A Sasquatch would surely have stood further away from the fence when stretching the other leg over the wire. When the tracks led towards the creek, they would turn back towards the road. A Sasquatch would surely have crossed the creek and entered the protected woods away from the road.

"In my opinion, the tracks involved hoaxing, and were purposefully produced, using cast material that was attached to usable boots."

This statement has been responded to and refuted by others investigating at greater lengths than did Hewkin in his hurried visit to a small area of the total scene. Wes Sumerlin, the veteran tracker, refuted the Hewkins claims in a letter to *Cryptozoology*.

At last report, the highly interesting, in-depth and scholarly response by Sumerlin was due for publication in the next issue of the ISC journal.

Validity of the tracks made that January down from the Blues to Mill Creek also drew affirmation from the veteran Bigfoot researcher, Grover Krantz. He said the tracks had "shown a moving, flexible, living foot."

This, of course, is at odds with the Hewkins belief that the tracks were made by someone using a boot with cast material attached.

And, it was Krantz who had declared belief that the Bigfoot which came down out of the frigid mountains to the warmer climes of the valley floor was probably about six feet, five inches tall and weighed 400-500 pounds.

Krantz also shared the feeling of Freeman and

Sumerlin and others that the Bigfoots usually inhabit the rugged 177,000-acre Wenaha-Tucannon Wilderness Area and its adjoining 23,000-acre Mill Creek Watershed. It likely was driven by cold weather to the lower elevation, the men said.

Then, adding to the opinions of trackers of the "Old School," i.e., Wes and Swede Sumerlin, Dave Been, Roger Thornton and Paul Freeman, the scientific tracker was heard from.

This was Greg May, who had been on the Bigfoot of the Blues story almost from the start. Using ultra-sensitive electronic devices on the tracks, May determined the likelihood of fakery was slim or nil!

My column in the Waitsburg "Times" for Feb. 7, 1991, carried the story of the May report. Here's the column:

#### ELECTRONIC SCAN OF BIGFOOT SITE

Creation by humans of several miles of Bigfoot tracks in the Mill Creek-to-Five Points area has been ruled out.

That opinion comes following exhaustive tests using high tech electronic scanning devices, according to Greg May, Colfax, Wash., Bigfoot investigator for the past several years. He presently is an instructor in wilderness survival at Washington State University.

May released his findings here Feb. 2 on his second trip to the latest sightings of Bigfoot tracks in this area, found Jan. 14 by Paul Freeman, Wes

Sumerlin and the writer. May came here on Jan. 25 to make tests over the full range of the trackage area running from a point on the Mill Creek road eight miles east of Walla Walla up into the Blue Mountains foothills.

May was not the only Bigfoot expert in Walla Walla Feb. 1-2. Coming here from British Columbia were a pair of the foremost: John Green and Bob Titmus. Freeman visited with them and May Feb. 1 before the three visitors conducted further investigations of the tracks that day, Freeman added.

In his report, May cites inspection of five sites of Bigfoot activity in the trackage area extending some six to eight miles above Mill Creek. He indicates "no track interruption for that distance." May also notes that he found hair, feces, vegetation disturbance, with tracks having been located in varying terrain and sediment.

In a disclaimer in his report, May observes: "Evaluation of impressions is based on known bipedal characteristics and tendencies. This does not allow for unknown characteristics of the purported creature, Bigfoot, or unknown prosthetic fabricative features."

"I am 90 percent certain that this site (of Bigfoot activity) is valid and not fabricated. I allow a 10 percent error for the possibility of the development of a fabricated prosthetic with the necessary flexible characteristics inherent."

May added that a major point in reaching his conclusions was that "proper indicator pressure releases were evident in many instances. This

rules out the possibility of hand tooling, barefoot human or a flexible, crude prosthetic."

May, drawing upon his knowledge of the action of a bipedal animal's walking habits and how scientists can determine various features from observance of that action, makes some further interesting conclusions. The animal making the several miles of tracks down from the mountains to warmer clime on Mill Creek was a male, aged 45 to 65 years and weighed 300 to 600 pounds.

May admitted that the probable two-week age of the footprints (when he viewed them) did not make for most ideal conditions for performance of his instruments and his own observations, but feels confident of results gained. This was especially true of tracks in a mixture of gravel and earth loam he found on the roadway to the creek, he said.

"I'm not very impressed with real plain tracks, especially those found near a road, but when I found this one near the creek and alongside a bulldozer's track, then I was truly impressed by that!"

May said he wasn't too hopeful of finding anything on this trip to Walla Walla. He said he was made aware of the tracks by Grover Krantz, anthropology professor at WSU and a close associate of his in Bigfoot research.

"I've just plain seen too much fakery in biological evidence of Bigfoot in the Blue Mountains over the past six years" he said. "I was just expecting to find another fake."

When asked to cite numbers, May said that of some 63 tracks and trails he has investigated in

this area, "there have only been four that I'm 100 percent sure are valid."

In concluding his report, May makes the statement that four Walla Walla persons should not be considered candidates for having made tracks. "The following four individuals do not have the physical characteristics to fabricate these tracks by simply walking: Paul Freeman, Duane Freeman, Swede Sumerlin and Wes Sumerlin."

Why these four Walla Walla men? I asked.

"In my estimation," May replied, "their reputation (concerning Bigfoot and tracks) in the Walla Walla area has been suspect."

May said he has become familiar with, over the years and close observation of, the four men's walking characteristics to rule them out from being able to make the tracks seen on the slopes of the Blues.

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**BIGFOOT SCORES FOR BROWNELL GRANDSON** — One Walla Wallan who has maintained for many years an interest in this Bigfoot thing is Walla Walla auto dealer, John Brownell. We talked at length the other day after the Jan. 24 issue of *The Times* and the Bigfoot report of the above tracks.

Brownell says he mailed a copy of that Jan. 24 *Times* to a grandson, Eric Brownell, 9, in Rhode Island. His grandson had earlier been the butt of some ridiculing from his third-grade classmates and even his teacher when he'd given a report on matters concerning the Bigfoot.

"That all changed when I mailed him *The Times*

and he read your column to the class for a show-and-tell project," Brownell chortled. "All the kids and his teacher are sure giving him a lot of respect now."

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*There was to be further refutation of the Hawkins claims when a Montana Bigfoot researcher came to town to make lengthy inspection of the miles of tracks.*

*Here's my Waitsburg "Times" column for April 4, 1991, which told that story:*

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Add one more opinion concerning the miles of huge footprints found here in 1991 and again a couple of months ago.

The voice of a visiting Montanan, Phil Farnes, of Bozeman, was heard the other day when a group of Walla Wallans met to discuss that and other evidence of Bigfoot in the Blue Mountains.

Farnes did not get to inspect this year's tracks, but came over in 1991 and had a long, long look at the footprints that came out of the mountains to Mill Creek near the Seven Mile Bridge.

A man who has spent his life in the forests of Montana and has been employed for 36 years with the Soil Conservation Service there doing snow surveys, Farnes is well acquainted with the outdoors.

Farnes is also no stranger to the Bigfoot thing, having spent considerable time studying it. He's found tracks in Montana and in Wyoming as well as these near Walla Walla.



He says he hasn't seen a Bigfoot yet but has put together a lot of knowledge about the creature, along with other denizens of the wilds.

Farnes is also an outdoor photographer with many year's experience, a skill he put to use when he came here in 1991 to visit his parents and brother.

And, to study the footprints they'd reported to him.

He took lots of photographs of the tracks that covered several miles above Five Points, around that area and then down to Mill Creek and back.

When I asked his opinion of the big tracks, his answer was quick in coming.

"They can't be replicated, I'm sure of that," Farnes replied.

So, I asked him his reasoning.

He ticked off three.

"For one, the fake foot would have to be a flexible foot.

"Then, I don't know how two feet could stride 40 to 45 inches apart for several miles and there's the weight needed to sink the feet so deeply into the soil.

"And, in many places, there was evidence where the tracks went into grassy areas, instead of just in the field.

"It might not be impossible (to fake the tracks) but it's highly improbable," Farnes concludes.

Farnes thus joins several others who have studied the tracks at lengths to come up with the same reasoning:

The tracks were NOT hoaxes, but instead, were

made by a living creature.

Two Walla Walla brothers, part Indian and raised on an Indian reservation and given the training in tracking all boys there received, also are firm in their belief that something live made the tracks. They are Wes and Swede Sumerlin, both of whom have spent most of their lives trapping, packing and living in the Blue Mountains.

Another person sharing their belief is of the new school of tracking, one that utilizes electronic surveillance and measuring devices, night vision cameras and the whole gamut.

He is Greg May, teacher of outdoor survival at Washington State University. His intensive scrutiny of the 1991 tracks developed the same result: tracks not made by humans, but by something alive and with feet resembling those of humans.

Farnes was here recently to sit in an a meeting of the band of Walla Wallans who hope someday to unravel this Blue Mountains Bigfoot mystery. It's a mystery not only of the 1991 and 1992 trackage. It's an ongoing matter of many years, The 1982 "close encounter" with one by Paul Freeman was the "kickoff" to the modern era of the beast of the Blue Mountains.

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**BIGFOOT ARTISTRY** — Rob Alley of Milton-Freewater, Ore., is another who has delved into the fascinating world of the Blue Mountains Bigfoot.

Alley is also an artist of no mean ability.

The fact of his artistic ability was fully illustrated recently when he gave me two pen-and-ink sketches

he has rendered. Not only are they scenes of the mountains the sketches feature a Bigfoot in each!

In the one, the Bigfoot is seated near a boulder-guarded pool, beside which rests an eagle.

In the second sketch, Alley has pictured a Bigfoot in the high mountains, seated on a rock and contemplating the more distant, snow-covered crags.

Much that must be the solitude found in this creature's life comes through Alley's works, it seems to me.

And, in talking with the artist, I gained even more insight into possibilities inherent with this creature seen by so few.

But, a creature obviously seen and really not by so few either, judging from the many reports one hears.

Stories spun by Alley, the artist/Bigfoot seeker, indicated a long tenure with each subject. His findings and his views on the Bigfoot, though, were of prime interest and will remain so in the time frame up ahead.

I'd like to hope so, at least!

## CHAPTER 11

The final year — 1992 — of the decade since Paul Freeman had seen the Bigfoot began almost like the ninth, 1991.

Again, in January, miles of Bigfoot tracks were found coming down from the Blue Mountains, wandering through a grove or two and then back

to the mountains.

*My column for Feb. 6, 1992, in the Waitsburg Times told the story of this second sighting of thousands of huge foot prints.*

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Bigfoot's back!

The week ending Feb. 1 proved a most rewarding and exciting seven days for local Bigfoot trackers.

They found more than hundreds of tracks of over-sized feet.

They found the imprint of a hand the size of a baseball mitt.

It all started with the discovery of tracks in a fall-plowed wheat field a mile north of the Mill Creek Road, or some nine miles from Walla Walla.

This was on Jan. 25 when veteran Bigfoot seeker Paul Freeman (who saw one up close in 1982) came onto tracks.

Actually, it was his dog, a Boxer he calls "Baby," who discovered the tracks.

As old as were the tracks, Baby caught the scent of whatever had made them and began circling about, barking and "putting up quite a fuss," Freeman recalls.

Walking over to the area in which the dog seemed most agitated, Freeman soon picked up the first of many tracks going across the field.

While they seemed quite old, the 14 1/2-inch tracks (measuring 6 1/2 inches wide) were fairly plain to see.

The following day, I accompanied Freeman and we joined Wes and Natalie Sumerlin and two

granddaughters, Danielle and Tommie, and Dave and Kay Been. The Roger Thorntons (of Waltsburg) were to join later to scour the field to look at the tracks.

A couple of days later, Sumerlin, accompanied by his brother, Swede, and a former Game Department employee, Bill Laughery, went back to the scene and put in a day really running out the tracks of the Bigfoot. Wes said they learned after several hours that the creature had come out of a brushy draw, climbed over a barbed-wire fence, crossed the road and headed out over the field. The Bigfoot, apparently coursing about in search of small rodents or other food, made its way down to the draw in which is the old Coyote School, then came back and eventually made its way back to the brushy draw from which it had come.

All agreed that the tracks were fairly old, maybe as much as two weeks old, although admittedly this was difficult to assess since it had been raining in the past week or 10 days.

Tracks checked out on the 29th by Freeman and Thornton six to eight miles east were not so old, and possibly were made a day before they located them in snow at the head of Blue Creek. Freeman said a couple of muzzle-loader elk hunters had found them and reported same to him.

These tracks were in a logged off area and much activity of tracks was seen in, around and on top of piles of logging slash (limbs of downed trees, piled to be burned later). Again, the tracks were practically identical to those near Coyote School, 6 1/2 inches wide at the widest and 14 1/2 inches

long.

Thornton got photographs of the prints and Freeman got some more video recorded shots to go with the footage he has been compiling all week. The cam-corder is a tool he uses on every foray to find Bigfoot or its tracks or other signs.

Dave Been and I made a sashay back to the Coyote School site on the 30th to investigate an oddity Been had found earlier that week. Here, in the brushy draw from which the Bigfoot had emerged a week or so before, he led me to the place where the ground under one tall pine tree was littered with the ends of pine boughs. It seemed like something had bit the ends off and cast them about the area. Other pines in the grove did not have the pine shoots beneath them.

Coming back to the hillside, Been and I picked up the Bigfoot tracks and followed them to the draw which holds the shell of the tumbled-down school. Been is an excellent tracker and while we kept losing the sometimes faint tracks, he usually could pick them up again.

One track had a smoothed area right alongside it, almost like someone had pressed a watermelon down in the damp earth. We conjectured that the Bigfoot had gone down on one knee at that point, possibly to get down out of sight of a car passing on the roadway a few hundred yards away, or else it had spotted a small animal.

Been accompanied Freeman the next day to the head of Blue Creek, to spend some time covering the area first gone over by Freeman and Thornton. Here, they were able to make an excellent plaster

cast of a huge handprint, found at the base of a pile of slash.

Freeman said there was ample evidence of the slash pile's having been torn apart and tree limbs and logs thrown about as well as the tracks being found on top of the pile.

What makes this January evidence in this area adjacent to the Mill Creek Road unique is the fact that just a year ago, several miles of Bigfoot tracks were found in the same area. The difference this year lay in their not coming all the way down to Mill Creek as they did in mid-January of 1991. For Bigfoot seekers it was a really great week!

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**TRACKERS JOIN FORCES —** Ex-Daytonite Bill Laughery admitted after spending a day with Wes and Swede Sumerlin that he had been treated to quite an exhibition of expert tracking this week.

While he had spent several years as a Game Department employee and knew his way around the Blue Mountains, Laughery hadn't acquired the knowledge he saw these two brothers demonstrate with their tracking ability that day.

Wes and Swede have probably put in more time than anyone else around these parts, at this business of tracking both animals and mankind.

Dave Been came here in recent years and has built a fine home on a point at the junction of Blue Creek and Mill Creek. He comes with a great background of tracking animals from the time in his youth in Arkansas. And, back then it often really mattered a lot whether they located the

quarry he and his brother sought. Even if it was only a squirrel.

Roger Thornton is another recent resident, having a home in Waitsburg but favoring a place "way up in the boonies," on Coppei Creek. Roger is no stranger to the Bigfoot thing, having been on more than one expedition hunting for same in other parts of the Northwest. Freeman, of course, hardly needs an introduction, having gained much newspaper and TV attention when he reported his encounter in June, 1982. He and a huge Bigfoot nearly ran into each other he was patrolling the Mill Creek watershed for the forest service. He left here and for a time lived in Camas, but came back to Walla Walla and has lived here since. Freeman probably averages at least two to three trips a week into the Blues, covering various sections in which he has found a lot of evidence (including two other sightings) of the creature he has sought so diligently since the 1982 affair.

For Paul Freeman, Swede and Wes Sumerlin, Roger Thornton, Dave Been, Bill Laughery and yours truly ... it has been a great week for sure!

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*This tracking down Bigfoot tracks was nothing new for Roger Thornton, the "Blue Mountains Bigfoot" newcomer mentioned above. He had been involved before coming here. He also had been here in January, 1991, and had investigated the major track finds of that date. Then, we met that summer at the Bigfoot Daze celebration in Dixie, Wash.*

*I did this story on Roger and his observations about the 1991 and 1992 tracks are highly*



*interesting. Here's my March 26, 1992, column from the Waitsburg Times:*

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There might have been a thought in the back of Roger Thornton's mind that some day he'd run into a Bigfoot when he and wife decided on the primitive lifestyle of the Blue Mountains.

After all, this was prime Bigfoot country, wasn't it?

That it is and the Bigfoot saga was soon coming to the Thorntons not long after they took up residence some 15 miles above Waitsburg on the upper limits of Coppel Creek.

That's UPPER as in capital letters, what with a couple of fordings of the stream needed before reaching their cabin!

Thornton had got his "baptism" of seeking for this Bigfoot creature some 30 years ago when he was part of a sizable expedition out of Skamania, Wash. As Thornton recalls, a Californian by name of Noah Fredericks put together the party of nine over-sized motor homes, photographers and a wide range of electronic gear, spending a fortune in the process. All to get some film footage of a Bigfoot.

With the leader's "fortune" down the drain, the expedition ground to a halt, sans any Bigfoot pictures, Thornton says.

Well, in the interlude, Thornton, a man highly skilled in crafting the finest hunting knives or a sword to your specs, never lost that yen to find a Bigfoot. Along the way, the man has amassed a head full of knowledge about the creature and its ways and the skills of tracking it and other

animals.

That's the background for the guy who a few months after arriving in the Blue Mountains, scanned *The Times* one day in January, 1991, to see news in this column about the thing he sought. It was the story (with photos) of the miles of Bigfoot tracks that Paul Freeman, Wes Sumerlin and I had found coming down from the hills near the Seven Mile Road area on Mill Creek.

"I would never have known about them if I hadn't seen the story in *The Times*," Thornton says. "And, the tracks were just over the hill from our cabin!"

Thornton thoroughly scouted out the tracks of '91 which came out of the brush near Five Points, wandered about that vicinity (snow in patches here and there) before they went on down to Mill Creek, then back to the hills via Blue Creek.

Thornton is the guy who found evidence of the animal's having gone back to the mountains. Those of us who found the tracks never did that much tracking or never went back up as far as Blue Creek.

Needless to say, when we again found Bigfoot tracks a couple of months ago and again in the Five Points-to-Coyote Road area, Thornton was right there on the spot. And by then, he'd made our acquaintance and was part of the informal group here which shares knowledge of sightings and rumors of sightings of this elusive creature.

Thornton, as do Sumerlin and Freeman, feels the tracks of 1991 and 1992 were made by two different animals, however.

Then, after the Coyote Road tracks had been thoroughly scouted out by Thornton and the rest of us, he and Freeman were to locate an even more exciting find a few days later. This was on Blacksnake Ridge, several miles above Five Points, in snow.

Some muzzleloader elk hunters had gone up the road then came back two hours later, stopping to chat with Freeman and Thornton. "Paul told them where he had seen some elk the day before. Then one of the guys, said: 'By the way, we saw some big bear tracks back there aways. They were real big, too.'

"Well, Paul and I went up there and found the tracks, all right, but they sure weren't bear tracks they were Bigfoot tracks."

Thornton notes that bear tracks rarely exceed 12 inches and of course come with a set of claws where toes would be.

And that area is where Thornton and Freeman found "just all kinds of tracks, all over the place" and evidence of something having torn up the piles of logging slash to get at rodents.

It was here they found a hand print (which has been pictured in *The Times*).

Finding the hand print was the Bigfoot deal of the year for Thornton. He has seen thousands of footprints of the creature but had before seen only a cast of one in the Oregon Museum of Natural History.

How do the tracks here compare with those he has seen around Skamania and elsewhere?

"I've seen far more tracks here and over a longer

stretch of distance than down at Skamania," he replies. "Down there you'd get to see a few tracks for a short distance (50-60 feet) but here we have seen them go on for miles. "I've gotten to see more tracks here than I thought I'd ever see."

Of the many big footprints Thornton has seen, he feels a good share were faked, at least those over near Skamania and elsewhere in the Cascades. He and a party of Bigfoot searchers even ran down a man who was busy faking tracks, by using a mallet to pound a fake foot into the dirt as he walked along on snowshoes covered with burlap.

Thornton says he and his party were long aware of the faking.

"No matter how clever a faker is at making the tracks, a good tracker can tell if the tracks are alive or not."

It was at Skamania, however, that Thornton saw the biggest footprint.

"That thing was 22 inches long and six inches wide and real deep into the soil. The animal that made that track must have weighed around a thousand pounds.

"Just standing there, looking down at the track made the hair come up on my neck."

Thornton says he feels sorry for people who don't believe in the Bigfoot creature.

Is there a "cure" for this?

"Sure, just invite people to come up and look at the next set of tracks we find, like these of this year and last. Then, educate them as to what they are looking at ... let them see the different impressions of the tracks and the inflections in them and

explain what all that means ... so they can envision what that animal is like as it stood there to make the track.

"Then, I think you'd change people's minds.

"Let them see what we've seen and they'd be believers."

Thornton has a response to the query I hear maybe more than any other about the Bigfoot matter: "If there is a Bigfoot why don't people see them?"

"A lot of people have seen the thing and a lot of people have seen one and don't know what they've seen."

Thornton even feels his wife may be included in that latter grouping.

Last September, driving down from their cabin, she spotted what she described as "a big man up there ... walking along, swinging his arms."

Thornton says that from the distance, the "man" had to be about nine feet tall.

Next day, he got up to the site of where his wife saw the creature, but could not find tracks. Conditions were quite dry, though. Who knows, maybe a Bigfoot was a lot closer to the Thorntons than "just over the hill" from their cabin.

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Well, things were really heating up with the Bigfoot of the Blues.

It had been a highly rewarding year to date for the Bigfoot buffs of Walla Walla.

And, it was going to get better!

In April, Freeman, who had been packing a movie camera, then a cam-corder since 1988,

brought home some footage which faintly showed what seemed like a Bigfoot.

Here's my report in the Waitsburg Times of April 16, 1992:

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A Bigfoot tracker for a decade says he captured a black Bigfoot on video tape Tuesday, 25 miles east of Walla Walla.

Paul Freeman was hunting mushrooms in the mountains April 14 when he stumbled upon the creature. He described it as between six and seven feet tall, weighing 500 to 700 pounds.

The creature walked upright and was black with some gray hair. The creature was about 70 yards from Freeman while he video-taped it. It appears one inch tall in the 20-minute, color film. It is visible about 15 seconds on the film.

In the excitement, Freeman failed to use the zoom lens for a close-up in the film he took about 11 a.m. while he was slowly "cruising" a mountain road 10 miles above Five Points and close to the Mill Creek Watershed boundary. He proudly showed the film, taken with a Sony Camcorder, to friends a few hours later.

Freeman gave this account of what happened:

He was on the road and suddenly, there below him in brush alongside the road was the creature he'd been seeking since his first sighting back in 1982.

"I thought it was coming right out and across in front of my pickup," Freeman said. "So, I slammed on the brakes and got out of the truck."

He said he made the mistake of slamming the

door, probably startling the creature, then about 30 yards from him.

At that point, Freeman ran up the road toward the creature. But, by this time it had bolted into the dense trees and underbrush nearby.

Freeman, anticipating that the creature would come out again to cross the road and try to disappear into the Watershed, went a few steps further. He stopped in hopes that the Bigfoot would cross the road ahead of him.

Sure enough, about 70 yards ahead, the creature emerged from the brush and walked a few steps. It stopped, looking at Freeman and his whirring camera in hand. "It turned and looked right at me," he said.

"I was scared; I was shaking all over when it crossed the road," he said. The creature rushed across the road and into the brush on the other side.

"From there it headed off toward the Watershed," Freeman said. "I had a heckuva time picking up his tracks but when I did, they went on into the 'Shed all right."

Freeman tracked the creature for a half mile and got a lot of footage of big tracks, all in a hurry and all real fresh. He said he tried to cut the creature off but "it was running so fast, it crossed before I got there."

One track indicates the Bigfoot had slipped and a track alongside it is either that of a hand or toes of the other foot, grabbing a hold to keep the creature upright.

Freeman's video of this and other action also

picked up all the sounds of the chase. At different points he said on the tape:

"I've been waiting 10 years for this."

"Where'd that critter go?"

"Boy, it's dark in here!"

As he pursued the creature, Freeman's heavy breathing and footfalls — captured on the tape — served to put an exclamation mark on this highly unusual and action-packed film.

It brought back to him the vivid memory of his first encounter with a Bigfoot.

"It looked just like the one I saw in 1982," he said of Tuesday's sighting.

He isn't fully satisfied with the film of the Bigfoot; the creature appears small because of the distance involved.

The experience demonstrated for Freeman something he had discussed with me only two days before:

"I wonder what would happen if I'd run at the critter with my camera?"

Today, Freeman knows — in this instance, at least. The Bigfoot ran away.

"If I had stood still, I could have got closer and got better pictures," the Bigfoot hunter says.

He will continue his quest for the elusive creature.

The filming was in the same general vicinity that extensive tracks were found two months ago. It is also near the place where Freeman and three parties of Walla Wallans in off-road vehicles spotted many tracks just last Saturday.

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Yes, for Paul Freeman and a whole lot more people the Bigfoot of the Blues was coming to shape real fast.

But, 1992 was far from over with.

As we shall see — as its summer was ending in the Blue Mountains.

## CHAPTER 12

Has the Blue Mountains Bigfoot saga run its course?

Well, after filming two close encounters with the "Bigfoot of the Blues" in four months, Paul Freeman says it has as far as he is concerned.

After 10 years of hot pursuit of the creature, Freeman on August 20 got the scare of his life when he met two of them.

After he was able to elude them and get away, Freeman firmly believes that the two Bigfoots spared his life.

"For some reason, they let me get out of there alive last Thursday," Freeman claims.

"I don't know what the reason might be, but I got the message — I'm not going to hunt them anymore. That was the last time. They warned me off!"

Freeman's most recent encounter came last Thursday morning near Deduct Spring where a house-sized "Waldon" pond is a favorite watering hole of many forest creatures.

Including Bigfoot.

The pond near Deduct Spring is about two miles

south of the Kendall Skyline Road just off the main road to the Skyline from Mill Creek. It is reached by good roads, 30 miles from Walla Walla, Washington. Half the distance is a paved route.

Freeman knew he'd find a Bigfoot at the pond if he had enough patience — and Freeman has gobs of that!

You see, this huge man (6-5, 300 pounds) has been the most persistent and well-organized hunter of Bigfoot the creatures have found to date. On a map about six feet square, Freeman has recorded every sighting of every track and other evidence of the Bigfoots for 10 years he's found in the northern section of the Umatilla National Forest. For air miles, the area probably stretches 14 miles east to west and 25-30 miles north-south. On the map are the dates and times of day for the 10 years of Bigfoot data.

The map holds a long litany of such information.

Early in his search for Bigfoots, Freeman packed a heavy duty rifle. Then, he quit packing a rifle about four years ago largely at the suggestion of a Bigfoot-hunting partner, Wes Sumerlin, he says.

"Since I quit taking a rifle along, I began seeing Bigfoots," Freeman says.

And, since leaving his gun at home, Freeman has instead taken to packing along a video camcorder.

With it, he recorded a Bigfoot's picture on April 20. It wasn't good quality, but you could see a creature moving.

Last week he recorded two Bigfoots, one in a menacing manner, then later, as he chased them

through the trees to film more of them, they were to prove even more threatening, to the point they were to frighten him more than he has ever been.

In recounting the incident, Freeman said he had been going up to the Deduct pond every day of last week, arriving there in his little compact car around 6:30 a.m. His habit was to drive to the left of the pond, park his car near the trees, then just sit and watch the pond for several hours, maybe a half day. His plan for August and into September (because of the map's data) was to go to the pond every day for that period.

But, last Thursday, Freeman arrived at the pond around 9 a.m., because he had been delayed in leaving his home. He parked his car, "never thinking to look over across the pond," he says.

"They (two Bigfoots) were probably standing right over there watching me — I found grass there matted down when I checked around."

Getting out of the car, Freeman unloaded his camcorder and got out his coffee jug and went over to the far end of the pond.

Bingo!

There's a couple of fresh Bigfoot tracks!

Real fresh!

With water still standing in them.

The maker of the tracks must have "just pulled out," Freeman conjectures. "It was probably there ready to get a drink of water when I pulled into the clearing in my car."

Checking out the fresh tracks, Freeman saw where they apparently had taken off in a hurry around some bushes and up the hill at that end of

the pond. At the other side of the bushes tracks resembling those at the pond's edge were seen coming down to the pond.

But, Freeman followed tracks going from the pond, heading up the hill. It was when he had proceeded only a short distance that he heard brush noises as twigs and limbs broke as a body was moving through the brush.

"I heard brush popping up ahead so got the camera ready and headed up that way," he recalls.

He filmed one Bigfoot at that point as it moved away from a small tree and then "it just disappeared."

But, then, a second Bigfoot, slightly smaller than the first, came into view and began moving toward the Bigfoot hunter.

"This is the one I got casts of its footprints at the pond," Freeman notes. "I think the larger one had been lagging behind the other when it went down to drink," he adds.

The Bigfoot moving toward him got to within 100 feet or so, he estimates. It was close enough that he could see what appeared to be a deformity in the Bigfoot's face.

"The side of its face was bulged out and deformed on its right side. "And, the Bigfoot was snarling at me!

"I was getting kind of excited about then, too, believe me!

"But, I kept trying to remember what (KXLY-TV newsman) John Yeager had told me in April about filming movement. I was doing okay but then it disappeared, veering off to one side. I followed their

tracks and saw where they went on over the hill.

"I shouldn't have followed, I guess. I think something had upset them — maybe someone had in the past shot a gun at them and they thought my camera was a gun."

Freeman pursued the creatures for "about a quarter mile or so," beyond the pond.

"Then, I could hear them nearby, making a lot of noises and an odd whistling sound with a loud popping with it and wheezing — I could hear that real good, too, and close by.

"I really got scared and upset then."

Spotting where a big tree had blown down and its roots creating a hole in the embankment, Freeman scuttled into the cavity to hide from the Bigfoots. He felt strongly at the time that they were seeking him to possibly kill him.

"I jumped down and crawled into the hole of the tree. The longer I sat there, the louder the Bigfoot noises got" as the creatures moved around, making their odd noises, Freeman says.

This is the point at which this huge outdoors man suffered his most frightening experience.

"I got just like a little kid," Freeman says. "I was so doggoned scared — and I was in a cold sweat!

"Finally, they calmed down and quit making their strange noises, so I got out. I crawled on my belly for a long ways down a ditch-like channel, then got away to the pond and my car and got the heck out of there."

When he arrived home, Freeman alerted some friends and he showed the video film he had shot. It is excellent footage and he has captured on film

the creature which has been his goal for a decade.

But, the hunt is over and no more will Paul Freeman conduct any more Bigfoot expeditions.

"Oh, I'll go up to the mountains, because I truly love the Blues," he says. "But I won't be hunting any Bigfoots any more. It's over. As a matter of fact, if I saw one on the road tomorrow, I wouldn't even film it. I'd leave it alone.

"I'd maybe just wave at it and say: 'Good luck, fella!'"

And, Paul Freeman enjoyed a small laugh.

Something he was not doing Aug. 20 when he was matching wits with two Bigfoots near Deduct Spring.

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Maybe it's part of the Deduct Spring affair and maybe it's not.

Anyway, when Freeman last week (the week before his Deduct experience) reported he'd heard that Bigfoot tracks had been followed all the way from Timothy Campgrounds to Squaw Camp on the Kendall Skyline Drive, it was exciting news. It did, however, pale a bit in light of the major news: Freeman's close encounter at Deduct!

Going to Deduct the next day after his encounter, Freeman was accompanied by two from KXLY-TV, Channel 4, Spokane and four other Bigfoot hunters. The TV people were newsman John Yeager and cameraman Brad Carlson. Completing the party were Wes and Swede Sumerlin and Swede's son, Frank, and myself.

After we'd checked out the pond site and poured some casting material in the footprints, most of us

went home. Swede and Frank, however, drove over to Squaw Camp to check out that track rumor.

Later in the day, Freeman headed back up to Deduct to get his castings, by now set hard enough to remove. On the way he met Swede and Frank and Frank went back to Deduct with Freeman to get the track castings. Freeman readily admits he was glad to see the Sumerlins and have one accompany him to Deduct. "I really didn't like the idea of going back there alone," he says.

Swede and Frank brought back confirmation of the tracks seen at Squaw camp.

"There are tracks all over the place up there," Swede declared.

He and Frank poured some castings and brought them out for study.

But, those who conjecture on these things, figure the host of tracks from Timothy over to Squaw (10 road miles!) likely were made by the same twosome that Paul Freeman met near Deduct Spring.

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As we sat in my office two days after his encounter with the two Bigfoots at Deduct, Freeman still was visibly shaken by the experience!

Paul was seated on the davenport across the table from me a few feet away. I could plainly see his bare arms glistening from perspiration as he recounted the meeting in the forest.

"I'm just as clammy as I can be," he said, his voice slightly quavering. I could readily see that the big man had undergone trauma of sorts. It was truly the most frightening forest experience of his

life, he acknowledged.

The meeting with two Bigfoots in a menacing manner to him was just that and nothing like he'd ever been through.

Freeman as a boy in Iowa ran a trapline and in Oregon and Washington he hunted and trapped.

"I never was scared of being in the woods alone," he avers. "Until now!" "But, those things warned me — leave 'em alone — don't press your luck!"

I asked Paul how this most recent experience compared with that first sighting of a Bigfoot up close in June, 1982.

His response indicated he felt that both he and the first Bigfoot might have had similar reactions to the other.

"That one in 1982 — I thought at first, as I spotted it — that it was going to jump on me. Then, it was kind of like: we just saw each other at the same time and it was a shock to both of us!

"It frowned at me, and the hair stood up on its head and shoulders.

"When I started backing away, it just turned and walked off.

"It kept looking back at me, though, every once in awhile and I kept looking at it for 300 yards or so, before it went over a hill and out of sight."

Do you think the Bigfoots generally are like most other wild animals when they encounter a man, I asked Freeman.

"That seems to be their first reaction, alright," Freeman answered. "They want to get away. Like in April (his first camcorder filming in 1992) where it was a big one and a little one. I'd seen the little



one going around the hillside below me. I think the big one just came out to draw me from the little one. The little one made a squealing noise."

The next day a party of Bigfoot hunters from Walla Walla made casts of two large footprints and one which was only seven inches long and four inches wide.

It could be there's a "family" of Bigfoots here we're dealing with, two adults and a young one, I suggested.

"But, we didn't find any seven-inch tracks at the Deduct sighting," I added.

"No, but it could have been there," Freeman said. "Remember the ground around the pond was pretty hard and all the way up the hillside where I followed them. It could be there."

If there had been smaller tracks a heavy rain of several hours on Saturday wiped away any trace in all likelihood.

Even after a few days of normal moisture (dew and the occasional mountain shower) will eliminate many tracks in the Blues, we agreed.

Reflecting back over the past 10 years, Paul Freeman and I discussed for awhile the affects of his search on his life.

"I've spent 10 years of my life looking into this Bigfoot thing," he said. "And, I really haven't got anything out of it at all.

"Nothing but a big headache."

Paul laughed when he said this, but the laughter had a tinge of sadness to it, too.

Would you say this decade of Bigfoot searching has at least indirectly had a good-sized impact on

your life — maybe that of your family, too? I asked.

"Yes, it sure has," was Freeman's immediate response. "It has caused me lots of problems.

"My kids and wife — they just don't like to talk about it. It has caused us so many problems over the years. I can hardly get any of them to talk about the Bigfoot thing.

"At school, the kids were taunted by classmates — 'your old man's nuts' was probably the kindest cut they heard.

His oldest son, a chef at a Walla Walla restaurant, while he has accompanied his father on occasion into the hills, is pretty close-mouthed about the subject, Paul said.

"And, people would call up on the phone (at least in the early years of this trauma) and a thousand times they've had to hear some smart-mouth razz them about Bigfoot. Some of our so-called 'friends' still get smart-mouthed about it."

But, was there not some element of satisfaction in this 10-year search? "I don't know," Paul said, "but I do know, I sure don't have to prove anything to anyone.

"I know what's up there.

"I know what I've seen and I sure know what I've been taking pictures of."

We went back to his severance from the U.S. Forest Service after he sighted the Bigfoot in 1982, then reported it to his superior. What has been his relationship with the agency on whose lands is found the majority of Bigfoot activity in the Blues?

Not fast with his response, Freeman weighed his words, before acknowledging that he "seldom talks

to Forest Service people about Bigfoot."

He did say he felt he had been unduly harassed in different incidents during the 10 years of seeking out Bigfoot activity.

"They offered me my (watershed patrol rider) job back (in 1982)," Freeman said. "But, I turned them down as I had in mind that I was going to kill one of the Bigfoots. I packed a gun for several years after the '82 meeting—I was going to shoot one.

"But the more I followed them and saw what they could do and how intelligent they were, I got to the point where I didn't want to pack a gun anymore.

"Wes talked me out of it, you know.

"I never got to seeing them again until I stopped packing a gun, either."

He has seen Bigfoots on several occasions since 1982.

But, except for twice when objects he and Wes felt were Bigfoots, Paul has been a lone observer, he notes with regret in his voice.

"I always see them when I am by myself. I wish I could see one when I was with someone."

That led me to ask the question so many have asked over the years, when reports come in of Bigfoot or his signs:

"How come Paul Freeman is the only guy who ever sees a Bigfoot?"

It was just that sort of response by a Forest Service spokesman in April, 1992, when Freeman brought home the first camcorder video pictures.

There are some obvious replies to the question, of course.

One of the most obvious, because of reports by

many other people of having seen the Bigfoot of the Blues — or his family -- is that Paul Freeman is NOT the only one seeing Bigfoots in the Blue Mountains.

Another pretty good answer to that question is that Freeman has spent an average of two to three days each week during the good weather (and some that wasn't!). This is mountain experience and seeking time that likely is unmatched by anyone, even employees of the Umatilla National Forest, many Bigfoot students will aver.

Then, there's this other matter which seems to bob to the surface as we peruse the man and listen to his reactions to the creature which has made itself such a part of the Freeman life for so long.

Has he possibly established some sort of rapport or affinity for the creature, where he knows within some bounds where the animal will be found?

Freeman hauls out his huge map of the Umatilla forest at this point and gives another response.

"It's my map," he declares, pointing to the almost hundreds of indications of Bigfoot's presence in the mountains. "Over that 10-year period you can see good patterns of behavior where they show up at certain places at certain times of the year, etc."

"Then, you almost knew you could keep going to that Deduct pond every day this month and likely you'd run into a Bigfoot," I suggested to him.

"Every time when I came home from a trip to the mountains," Freeman said, "I'd put on the map what I'd seen, like the date and time of day, and so forth. A lot of information starts to show up after

10 years, but I'm ready to give it all up now." We talked some more about his habits of almost ten years of his Bigfoot search.

And what a different world it is in the Blues.

"A lot of strange stuff goes on up there that people just don't realize," Freeman said. "If they'd spend any time in the mountains, they'd see that!

"I go up two or three times a week, but lots of times I just drive the roads, or park and sit there for several hours and watch with my binoculars. I seldom go walking and for no distance anymore, with my bum foot.

"I know where they cross the roads up there and the old trails, water (streams, ponds, etc.) and when they are in certain areas (there's that map record again!) and I just start frequenting those areas.

"I knew they were going to come into the Deduct pond — this month or next and maybe then again before September ends. It's a good watering hole — deep enough for a bear or elk to swim in and for a Bigfoot too."

When Paul Freeman came around the curve in that old logging road in June of 1982 and was face to face with an eight-foot Bigfoot he joined a select group of people:

The Bigfoot hunters.

Or, rather, the big names of those who have sought the secret to this elusive creature now said to populate every state in the Union.

Paul Freeman joined the ranks of such people as Grover Krantz, John Green, Bob Titmus, Rene Dahinden, Erik Beckjord and some others who

have gained a measure of recognition for expertise in the Bigfoot phenomena.

Does he have any thoughts after his having been so abruptly thrust into their company and with a decade's having passed?

Just as when I asked about his relations with the Forest Service, Paul's response was a bit slow in coming.

"That's a very unique group of people," he said.

"I don't think I want to comment much on that subject," he added. "Some have been nice, some haven't. Let's just leave it at that. I don't say anything bad about anybody and I don't see why we can't all work together on it (the subject of Bigfoot).

"Grover (Krantz) has stood behind me all the way and has treated me okay.

"Erik Beckjord ... well, he has views that are different than mine, although there are times when I think I might be thinking the way he does .... "

As our visit was winding down, Paul came back to the resolve to end the Bigfoot search.

"Oh, I'll go to meetings (of the Walla Walla Bigfoot group) but I am not going into the brush anymore looking for Bigfoot."

Freeman acknowledges that going it alone was not wise, though.

"I went alone a lot of times, although sometimes Wes and I or my son, Duane, would go with me," he commented. "But, I always told Nancy (his wife) where I was going and if I wasn't home by a certain time, to come looking for me.

"And, I always told her that if they found me dead, they should look for my video camera, because whatever killed me is going to be on it — because I'm going to film it until it gets hold of me."

His trips from his home in the Eastgate district of Walla Walla weren't always pleasant jaunts on sunshine-laced days accompanied by the chirping of birds.

"I've spent a lot of time up there and slept out a lot of nights in my old pickup truck a week at a time, sometimes, years ago. I've had trucks break down and have to walk out and come back several days later and fix them and get them out of the mountains. I've gone up roads that other RV rigs wouldn't go. "I can't walk anymore, like I used to so I have used the pickup and now a car to get up there."

Freeman suffered a broken foot several years ago and that has been his walking problem ever since. He was driving an 18-wheel rig at the time.

"I broke the metatarsal arch in my foot in 1986," he explains. "I was at work and jumped out of my truck, a four-foot drop, and my foot rolled as I hit the ground — thought it was a sprain at first, but the arch was broken. It was set but wouldn't heal and operations have been done and they haven't done any good, doesn't heal."

Freeman says he has to use a lot of caution on rocky ground and can't wear the customary outdoors boot.

But, it doesn't matter much anymore, he says, at least not for hunting Bigfoot.

"To me, Bigfoot is one of the eight wonders of the

world and I'm just proud to have been a part of it," Freeman says.

"While it lasted."

Freeman has collected an enormous amount of Bigfoot memorabilia and items which indicate "Bigfoot was there." This material includes the usual plaster-of-paris casts of a wide assortment of tracks, broken and twisted small trees, hair samples galore, feces, a section of an elk hide with huge teeth marks embedded in it and much, much more.

The Freeman collection even includes life-sized figures he had a Whitman College artist do for him. One is six feet tall and black-haired, representing a female Bigfoot. The other is eight feet tall, is brown-haired and is a male. He has taken some of his material to a mall or two for a weekend display and hopes to do the same with other malls at least in the Northwest and California.

All this is found in boxes that "fill up the house and the garage and a mini-warehouse," he said.

A lot of the material is Bigfoot-related but things nobody has seen, Freeman adds.

But, for Paul Freeman at least, the search for the Bigfoot of the Blues is a closed issue.

In the decade since he stumbled across his first one (and became a believer) the chase is over.

But, Paul Freeman managed to film the creature twice. He shot it — with a camera. And captured it — on film.



## Chapter 13

*He said he wasn't going out looking for Bigfoot anymore, after 10 years of trying to get one ... first with a gun, then with a camera.*

*But, he did it this time as a guide, advisor and "leading man" for a television program, nearly a month after he got the "scare of his life." The program, "Hard Copy," came to Walla Walla for a filming centered around the video footage Freeman had shot in August.*

*My September 17 column in the Waitsburg "Times" provided details of this fourth time for a TV crew to film a story related to the "Bigfoot of the Blues."*

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A crew from "Hard Copy," a tabloid TV program, got a booster shot when they showed up in the Blues the other day.

The trio came from Los Angeles to film the area in which Paul FreeMan shot some good video footage of a couple of Bigfoots

Aug. 20.

A 30-minute documentary is scheduled for early showing by "Hard Copy," they told us. Possibly Sept. 25. This would be 6:30 p.m., Channel 19 (CBS).

With Freeman and I in the lead vehicle motoring up the Mill Creek Road Sept. 9, we were taking them to the pond near Deduct Spring where Freeman had spooked the two creatures in August.

Before we reached the turnoff road to the pond, Freeman says: "Go on past (Deduct) up to the junction and on a little way past it. We might spot a print or two if we're real lucky."

We hadn't been parked but a minute in the area Paul sought when I spotted the first of several tracks at the road's edge which led off through the brush, then were picked up in a clearing.

These were 14 inches long and six inches wide. They had been made prior to the day's rain storm, maybe that morning or the night before, we estimated.

After following the tracks for about a block or so, we went back to the cars and returned down the road, thinking to go to the pond, but a prior arrangement to pick up a fourth TV crew member at the airport dictated we go back to Walla Walla.

So, an early start at the pond near Deduct was set for the next day.

But, talk about stumbling into a piece of good luck! Those "Hard Copy" guys really did it!

With plans merely to shoot some background scenery for their documentary featured by Freeman's footage of Aug. 20, they really had a bonus with fairly fresh tracks and lots of them!

A question fired at me as we walked back to the car:

"Have you ever seen those footprints back there before today?"

Since the tracks came as a complete surprise to both Freeman and myself, you know what I said.

Actually the tracks were a pleasant surprise to both Freeman and I. We'd only been slightly hopeful

we'd see something. Oh, maybe a flimsy track several days old, maybe.

But, nothing like what we saw — fairly fresh ones and lots of them to boot!

Well, that was Day 1 of the "Hard Copy" coverage of the episode which Freeman says has closed down his 10-year search for a Bigfoot. That decision came, you recall, when he was jumped by not one, but TWO Bigfoots near the pond. He says the scare he got that day convinced him he'd received a "message" that he had better cease and desist his search of a decade!

The second day of "Hard Copy's" crew began early ... we left Walla Walla at 6 a.m. and shortly after 7 we were filming at the pond.

The occasional call of a raven was "just perfect," murmured the audio man of the two-man camera crew as they set up their impressive electronic gear. We were right at the spot where we could see evidence yet of a Bigfoot's tracks. Where it had apparently been startled from getting a drink from the pond when Freeman drove up that morning in August.

This was the scene of much of the activity that morning so a lot of time was spent here by the TV crew. They worked real fast and quite efficiently, however, doing no more than two or three "takes," then moving to another setting.

While there had been three guys here the first day, the second day another had been flown in to Walla Walla from Harrisburg, Penn. This was Chris DeRose of Los Angeles, the correspondent, or person who did the interviewing of Freeman.

Those who had come the first day were Joe Tobin, Los Angeles, the director, and Todd Freeland and Eric Van Winkle of the Tri-Cities.

Freeland, who manned the camera, and Van Winkle, on the audio equipment, are "freelancers." Both have other, regular jobs. Van Winkle, whose father was born in Walla Walla, sells advertising for the cable TV company in the Tri-Cities.

As Tobin explained, the practice is to hire camera-sound crews at or near the scene of any action they film around the country.

"There's always a camera crew in any town, practically," he said.

I stayed with the crew till around 11 a.m., when they wanted to head back to Walla Walla to meet a helicopter pilot, flying here from Hamilton, Mont. As we stopped in the road to parlay before heading down to Walla Walla, Tobin's TV crew got its second "break."

They met a bow hunter who turned out to be a skeptic of the entire Bigfoot thing !

And, of course, this fits in like a hand in a glove with anyone, even TV news crews, out doing a story: they got a shot at someone willing to "explain" the Bigfoot phenomena.

Tobin said the skeptic was a local resident, Dennis Carter of Milton-Freewater. Another break, since they were filming a Blue Mountain story.

That night, the chopper, equipped with the latest military-type infra-red, night filming camera, with heat-seeking devices to do the job, flew sorties over the Mill Creek Watershed and vicinity. The pilot was Ron Carlick, Freeman said.

The target, of course, was to film a Bigfoot, who seems to like the safety of the Watershed.

While deer and elk were spotted — one elk so close and so clear his blinking eyes could be seen, I was told — but no sign of a Bigfoot. A split-second glimpse of a bear was also noted, but it got into brush real fast, Freeman told me.

If Bigfoot truly likes the sanctuary provided by the Watershed and he was in there last week on Wednesday night, it likely got to cover when it heard the chopper.

After all, if it has survived all these centuries without being wiped out by man and beast, it must be a little smarter than the average animal!

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And so ends the 10-year saga of bagging a Bigfoot ... a task Paul Freeman found — even after the most arduous and time-consuming “big game” hunt ever — a never-ending game of hide-and-seek. The Bigfoot’s ability to stay out of sight of the finest night photography equipment possibly is testimony to the creature’s ability to survive.

An ability which is possibly not explained by considering the thing in a zoological light.

If that last sentence makes sense, then we have a darned good explanation for “why don’t we ever find bones, etc.?”

This makes for an entirely different “ball game,” but one we’ll try to play in another chapter of this book.

## CHAPTER 14

What in the world is going on? Or, what is going on in the world? Is there more to this Bigfoot thing than meets the eye of the beholder?

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This book has attempted to put down the main points of the 10-year Bigfoot search by one man and how that search affected him and his family, as well as how others have been touched or drawn into the saga.

I have also inserted a small issue which will doubtless raise the eyebrows of many who read these lines. This closing chapter will set forth in far greater detail material related to that issue.

I speak of the matter of Bigfoot's coming here from either another planet or from another dimension on Earth.

I told you there'd be raised eyebrows!

However, have patience. Read on!

As I have mentioned before, in my sizable files of clippings and magazine articles and other printed material, I have a wide (some will call it "wild") range of opinions and articles about the paranormal and the UFOs among us.

There! I've said it ... UFOs and Paranormal!

But, any discussion of the Bigfoot issue is incomplete without the discussion of the two subjects. Or, is it one subject? They do seem to be intertwined, somehow, in this veritable mountain of material in my files. I found it in the Blue

Mountains as a party of Walla Walla people experienced a loss of time one day, saw a "silvery, silo-like thing on the hillside," and a Bigfoot in the same vicinity.

But, I find the matter of UFOs and Bigfoots as a connective subject abounding in many parts of our world, according to my files.

That story needs more details, especially since this is the report on Bigfoots in the Blue Mountains. We'll get to other stories in other places concerning this Bigfoot/UFO connection later on. This Blue Mountains tale comes from Wes Sumerlin, who needs no special introduction at this point in my book. It is his report (in largely Wes' own words, too) about the encounter he and a friend, Stub Gray, and their wives experienced during a fishing trip into the heart of the Blues in 1979.

I asked Wes to set it down as he recalled the happenings spread over two weekends that summer of '79 on the Wenaha River.

Getting together with Stub, the two recalled that period. Here's Wes' account:

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Stub and his wife, Bev, are out of the Tennessee mountains and were good people to be riding at your back. Stub knows his way around the mountains and has a fast eye. I am an Indian x-breed from the Colville Reservation, the mountains along the Canadian border and a trained tracker.

This is our story.

As usual, from "green-up" time to "freeze-up" time the two families (Grays and Sumerlins) and grandchildren spent all possible weekends in the

Blue Mountains, following the snow-line back, camping, fishing, tracking, training our children or just riding and exploring trails ... whatever came first.

On this particular weekend of our story, it was a fish camp for bull trout about 50 miles back into the Blue Mountains, the Wenaha River country ... unspoiled by civilization, some 40 miles of wild animals, river and forests, purely God's country, before you emerge back into civilization. This is now in the Wenaha-Tucannon Wilderness Area.

My wife, Peewee, is at home over an open camp fire as much as she is in the kitchen at home at an electric range. Peewee is a top hand at whatever she does, on the trail or in camp.

It was a Friday, the latter part of August, 1979, when Stub and I got home from work and arrived at my house. Peewee and Bev already had the pack boxes all loaded up with supplies, the horses corralled up and supper all ready for us to eat, load up and go.

We arrived at Timothy Meadows trail head to the Wenaha River around midnight. The women made coffee while Stub and I saddled and packed up the horses. We had decided to trail till daylight, fish at first light, then make camp, lay around through the heat of the day and fish that evening. Then, fish Sunday till mid-morning, pack up, trail out and come home. We always tried to be home Sunday evenings by dark.

Saturday, P.M. — Our camp was set in a bend in the Wenaha River, water on our right side and behind us about 30 feet away. Around 9 p.m., Stub



said he heard the mail plane coming overhead, on its way to Lewiston, Idaho. Peewee told him the airplane made a different noise (than what Stub heard) crossing over the Wenaha canyon.

We were hearing a droning or buzzing noise with no echo to it.

Bev told me to build up the fire so she could make a new pot of coffee in the one-gallon pot. While Peewee and Stub were talking about the noise we were hearing, I was building up the fire and Bev was putting on the new pot of coffee. I plainly saw her put coffee grounds in the pot for a beam of light suddenly came from the mouth of the canyon. It showed on the river, reflecting on to her and the fire. I looked at the horses and they were all froze like statues, staring to the mouth of the canyon. I could see no reason for the light.

"What is that fog?" Peewee said.

There was a kind of blue fog coming from the river toward our camp.

The next thing I recall is Stub, asking me to pour him a cup of that fresh coffee and I notice the horses are quietly eating their pellets and everything seemed "normal" or just like it had been.

Until I picked up the coffee pot from the fire.

It was nearly dry.

Then, I realize there is hardly any fire only nearly dead coals.

We looked over the coffee pot and found the grounds had boiled out over the top. The little remaining liquid is only lukewarm.

Then, we know we have some missing time.

Maybe we all went to sleep for a while.

It's seems sort of funny we all woke up at the same time.

That is our thoughts for then.

Sunday A.M. — Shortly after first light, Stub and I are riding down to a log jam in the river, about two miles below camp. We look across the river and up on the side of the canyon sits a silver tower, like a silo, about 20 feet wide and 40-50 feet high. It was a bright silver in color.

Checking it over with our high-powered (10x50) field glasses, we could find no weld seams or rivets or any kind of fabrication mark on the "silo."

We figured maybe the Forest Service (Umatilla National Forest) had built a fire lookout tower, but if so, how did they get it there and assemble it?

Stub and I promised ourselves we'd ride up to the silo next weekend and take a good look at it ... "we're fishing this weekend!"

Making those plans, we rode on downstream and went to fishing.

I am fishing under a falls of water created by a logjam, when two rocks flash into the water near me. It startled me till I turned and saw Stub waving his arms like he is trying to climb a ladder to the sky. I see he is "spooked," so I wade over to him.

He says he heard that whirring noise of last night again and it was coming from the direction of our camp. Stub also said he thought we'd better get back to camp to see if the women were okay. So, we lit out for camp.

When we got back to where we'd earlier seen the silo, it was gone!

"We'll check it out next week," I said and we kept

going. When we reached camp, the women both said they had also heard the whirring sounds.

We hurriedly packed our gear and up the trail to our rig and back home.

That was enough for the weekend!

Saturday A.M., one week later — The women stayed home this weekend. Four of us: Joe, Larry, Stub and I, headed back to the tower site. When we got about a half mile from the site, we were riding around a bend in the trail on the river when we surprised a pair of Bigfoots. They were sitting on a log, eating fish! They were probably bull trout and about 20 inches long.

One of the critters jumps into the brush and the other, about eight feet tall or better, stands up and growls.

All hell broke loose and suddenly we are having a 4-ring rodeo!

Joe and his saddle get bucked off by his horse. Stub gets bucked off.

Larry and I get control of our horses.

The big critter after growling at us, jumps off the end of the point and runs across the flat and into the timber.

We re-saddled our horses and headed for home in a big hurry!

Winter set in and that was the last chance to get into the high country that year.

During the winter, Bev died and I suffered a major heart problem, leading to surgery. I am now recovered and will be deep into the high country the summer of '93.

I plan on doing a lot of looking around.

What with his heart problems and the long recovering period, Wes never got the chance to pursue the mysterious "silo" he and Stub saw that day. Stub says he has flown over the site in a helicopter and could see signs of an indentation in the ground. Because it lies within the Wenaha-Tucannon Wilderness area, the pilot could not land to give Stub a closer inspection.

At this point in time, it is probably unlikely any indication of a UFO's having landed there to discharge Bigfoots would be found.

"You just never know, though," Wes says.

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One of the major publications which discusses the Bigfoot matter in detail is the "Bigfoot Co-op," published at 14602 Montevideo Drive, Whittier CA. Constance Cameron, anthropologist, California State University at Fullerton, CA, is the editor. Cost of the "Co-op" is \$8 per year and if you're a Bigfoot buff you should be getting this highly informative little quarterly.

I have been a subscriber and contributor for several years now and look forward to each issue, since it is such a great receptacle for Bigfoot information. News comes to it from all over the globe! The contributions are not always of a zoological nature, however. Many people have sent the publication clippings and opinions concerning the Bigfoot and the UFO connection and the '63 Bigfoot and its paranormal possibilities.

I'll share with readers of this book some of the items of most interest that I have gleaned from the

"Co-op."

Also being shared in this chapter will be the comments from some individuals as well as from other publications which will bolster the chapter (and the book), I hope, for all readers.

My references to the items from the "Co-op" will include the issue and the date, for those who would like to read for more details of the cited instance.

At least three persons turn up in my files who say they have been in contact and have spoken to Bigfoots! One man tells me he doesn't know how he can "call them up," but is able to do it, and has received messages of peace to mankind from them.

Reflecting the same thought is the following item I gleaned from the April, 1988, Bigfoot Co-op: "My name is Stan Johnson and I've lived near Sutherlin, OR for 17 years. In 1983 I began to have ongoing face-to-face contact with the Sasquatch people, also known as Bigfoot. I was adopted into a family of Sasquatch and communicated with them telepathically as they showed me how they live, what they think and feel, and all about their origin and history."

Johnson said he has written a book about his experiences and conversations. His address (in 1988) was 6059 State Highway 138 West, Oakland OR 97462.

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The experience of a miner in Arizona was reported to the Co-op for February 1988, by Virginia Louise Swanson. The aspect of the para-normal is obviously here, the story of a miner named Hermit:

"Hermit had picked and dug long hours, bent over double, until movement in the nearby brush caught his attention. He straightened to look — and look again.

"Must be deflected shadows — maybe 'sumpin gone wrong with his good eye — or mind had gone haywire — this couldn't be real.

"Standing upright 30 to 50 feet above him stood a monstrous, hairy, 12-foot animal-man, just staring at him. It did not threaten nor even move, just stared. Hermit stared back, motionless, paralyzed with fright.

"Finally, the creature went back into the brush. It did not turn as a man would, neither did it thresh around as an animal. It seemed to MELT from sight! It could not be a shadow as Hermit had glimpsed its glowing eyes."

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The December, 1991, issue of the "Co-op" reports a highly interesting story of the UFO-Bigfoot connection. The following is from an article taken from "Western Folklore," January, 1990 issue, by Linda Milligan:

"Up until the early 1970s the debate about Bigfoot's nature centered on whether or not it was an ancient ape, a human-like creature, or an ape-man. But as early as 1968 accounts emerged linking Bigfoot to UFOs. Janet and Colin Bord report that witnesses in Salem, Ohio, saw 'a large, shadowy, man-like creatures (sic),' 'A large cat-like creature,' and a UFO near their home (Bord 1982, 92). In the 1970s similar reports proliferated, particularly in Pennsylvania.

"Stan Gordon, Director of the Pennsylvania Association for the Study of the Unexplained, writes that in 1973 Pennsylvania experienced its largest wave of Bigfoot sightings, with over 100 documented reports involving 250 eyewitnesses. Gordon's group notes that in many instances UFOs were reported in the same area shortly before the creature was sighted. The suspected link was confirmed in the case — where a young man, along with his young brothers, saw two Bigfoot-like creatures standing just below a hovering UFO. Gordon believes the two phenomena are linked, although he is not certain how (Gordon 1982, 3)."

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Then, there is this item from the October, 1990, issue of the "Co-op," in which an Argentina resident tells of seeing a possible UFO-Bigfoot connection, witnessing: "... an aerial artifact that after staying for some minutes, stopped in space, descended in a clearing in the thick woods surrounding the place, near a riverbed. "It had a circular shape, with two small domes, one above and another below, and gave off, from what looked like a peephole, milky-colored flashes. Subsequently a door opened up, through which a strong beam of light shot out, similar to a searchlight, which lit up a large part of the scene. Despite the rain that was falling, I could see how on its surface some singular maroon-colored spots were moving. Shortly before disappearing, rising up vertically, there came out of the door, hunched over at first, an animal resembling a bear, seen from afar, which

straightening up, rapidly entered the thicket."

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Another quarterly publication to which I subscribe, "Flying Saucer Review," (printed in England) contained in its Winter, 1991, issue, a rather startling article concerning the UFO-Bigfoot connection. Its editor, Gordon Creighton, said the 1991 sightings on Puerto Rico are nothing new and have been going on for centuries!

"Puerto Rico has been the scene of all the most controversial and diverse sorts of paranormal phenomena, such as 'encounters with fairies,' 'apparitions of yetis,' (Bigfoot?) of strange animals, of UFO sightings ... etc."

That issue of the "Review" quoted a few of the more recent apparitions, but Creighton noted that the whole catalogue of sightings on the island would be a vast undertaking! And, he prefaced the listing with these words:

"We use the term 'paranormal' rather than the word 'ufological,' because we view the manifestations of the so-called UFO Phenomenon as forming a part of the world of the Paranormal. And when we speak of 'extraterrestrials,' or 'humanoids,' we are not thinking exclusively of beings emanating from other planets, but rather of ultra dimensional entities, from another Space-Time, manifesting themselves in our Space-Time and assuming some particular appearance or other."

Very intriguing words, to say the least!

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The April-June, 1992, issue of the "Co-op" reports three UFO-Bigfoot incidents in an article submitted



by Albert Rosales. They represent strong cases for the UFO linkage:

"I must say that my main area of interest when it comes to the unexplained is UFOs and UFO-related Humanoids. Bigfoot and Bigfoot-like creatures come in a close second. I have been involved with such studies since the early 1970s and it is always fascinating to read about a new report and to hear other people express their ideas.

"I concluded several years ago that there is a solid link between the UFO phenomena and certain Bigfoot-like creatures. A view shared by various people, especially Gordon of Pennsylvania and most of the Ohio researchers. There have been numerous incidents mentioned in the literature that indicates a clear link. I am going to mention two cases, one fairly recent, of Bigfoot-like creatures seen in or coming out of a UFO-like object. Both cases are not that well known outside of UFO circles. One is a foreign case and is probably not known to many UFO researchers.

MUFON UFO Journal #264      April 1990  
near Tillamook, OR      Sept. 27, 1989 4:20 pm

"A woman alerted by her young granddaughter to something unusual, stepped outside and was confronted by an object resembling an inverted toy top hovering just above the ground. It was maybe 20-30 feet in diameter and had a flat bottom and a bright yellow-white light shone at both ends. The woman approached the object to within 30 feet and a door opened revealing a blond human-like being

of average height with fair skin and blue eyes, wearing a silvery coverall. The woman then noticed, at a window next to the door, a large, hairy, Bigfoot-

like creature apparently seated and visible from the chest up. The woman stared at the object and beings for a few minutes, then the object suddenly vanished from plain view. Suggesting inter-dimensional travel?

Humcat Files #1844 (Addenda)

Between Mairiux and Mauberge (Nord) France

Joel Mesnard & Jean-Marie Bigorne Nov. 26,  
1973 1:00 a.m.

"A man and a woman in a parked car on the Canourgue Road, apparently connecting both locations, noticed a white metallic-looking dome-shaped object on a snow-covered field about 100 yards away. A large dark opening became visible and six beings of three different kinds emerged. They were small, 4-foot-tall humanoids with large heads, protruding eyes, large white holes for a nose, narrow mouths and bulging cheeks. They also had very long arms. They wore white-metallic one-piece suits and each carried a dark 6-inch box with a round white-luminous screen. They walked slowly with stiff, small steps and approached within 50 feet of the witnesses. Behind these beings stood two human-like figures, very tall (6.5 feet), with light complexions and blond, shoulder-length hair. They were also wearing white-metallic, tight-fitting one-piece suits and stayed by the object. Now, the important part. Also emerging

from the object was a large, squat figure with long, dangling arms, covered with dark fur 'resembling a great ape.' The ape-like creature re-entered the object first, followed by the two tall humans and then the short humanoids. The object rose vertically, becoming orange-luminous, then bluish, then reddish, before disappearing from sight.

"If true, these two cases clearly show a connection between UFOs and some Bigfoot-like creatures. I will not make any speculations as to the meaning of the connection but I am formulating some theories. "There is another bizarre Bigfoot incident I would like to point out. This case is mentioned by Tom Dongo in his book, "The Alien Tide," page 94: (Date: Summer 1989, daytime)

"A man was touring some property under construction in the sparsely populated area of Red Canyon/Loy Butte, near Sedona, Arizona, when he encountered something that looked like a portal or window suspended in midair. Near the portal stood several nine-foot tall Bigfoot-type creatures that appeared to be guarding the site. The witness did not hang around and left the area quickly. This case seems to indicate an 'interdimensional' origin of some Bigfoots."

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Yes, the Bigfoot Co-op is a much valued resource for the study of this most fascinating subject.

Quite possibly the most fascinating subject to visit the planet!

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This final year of the Bigfoot of the Blues decade brought a new friend for me: Don Worley of

Connersville, Indiana, but earlier in his life a Washingtonian like myself.

We met through correspondence when Worley received a clipping out of the Waitsburg Times containing a Bigfoot article of mine. He subscribes to a newspaper clipping service. While we have only conversed on the phone it is hopeful the friendship and the mutual interest in Bigfoots and UFOs will be a lengthy one!

Worley's life is another which has become inseparably entwined in this Bigfoot thing, as his letter indicated.

"For the last 27 years I have been engaged in my chosen avocation: Unidentified Flying Object (UFO) investigation and research. For much of this time I was a field investigator for two of our nation's leading UFO research organizations in southeastern Indiana. These groups were the Center for UFO Studies (CUFOS) and the Aerial Phenomena Research Organization (APRO). These were non-profit, educational, scientific research organizations whose advisory staffs consist of scientists from many fields. In my area I investigated over 350 individual sightings. Our efforts were concentrated on the investigation, documentation and analysis of UFO reports and their related ground level phenomena.

"For many years I had Indiana State Police assistance in learning about such reports. In 1967 I acted as part of a reporting net for the University of Colorado scientists government-finance UFO study. "Beginning in 1973 I specialized in the investigation and research of several categories of

UFO ground level activity, namely ape-like entities called Bigfoot, the surgical acquisition of certain cow parts and the Men in Black (MIB). In 1976 I was invited to present a paper on my entity research at the CUFOS Evanston, Illinois, conference. Scientists and lay persons from a number of countries presented papers on the various facets of the UFO mystery.

"I have been in on or know about so many things regarding ape-like entities: Sasquatch, Bigfoot, Yowie (Australia) or what ever they are called in various areas, that it would be impossible to relate it all. "Just heed the experienced claims of an investigator-

researcher — they are all one and the same. All bio-etheric creations of the intelligence behind UFOs. Sorry if that sounds nuts and I wish it were not so.

"I hope the material (which he sent along with his letter) will help you realize that there must be something going on that you could not comprehend due to ignorance."

In the sheaf of papers containing much data which Worley sent me, there is the highly interesting section on incidents where the Bigfoots have been shot at with high- and low-caliber rifles. Here is a sampling and an idea of what might just occur should you meet a Bigfoot and you try to gun him down.

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INCIDENTS SUPPORTING THE PARA-PHYSICAL  
HYPOTHESIS HIT BY GUN FIRE:

Wellington, Florida, September 1974 — Hit by

six rounds of dum dum bullets fired from 30 feet by security guard, grabbed chest and ran like a track star.

Uniontown, Penna., February 1974 — Woman fired from six feet away with a 16-gauge shotgun at entity on her porch. The blast went into its midsection, causing it to instantly disappear in a flash of lights as if someone had taken a flash photo.

Wantag, N.J., May, 1977 — Farmer and neighbor fired volley of 30 shots from 222 Magnum and 410 loaded with deer slugs. Entity fled with no blood shed or other effects.

Whitewater, New Mexico, January 1969 — (Bigfoot) passed auto at 45 miles per hour, was shot, got up and ran away. No blood on highway.

Pennsylvania (no town) August 1974 — Ape-like entity disappeared at moment of impact with auto.

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Here are a few more intriguing incidents from the Don Worley case book:

Lincoln County, Tenn., July 1976 — Black panther-like animal was seen in woods near an ape-like entity.

In Northwestern New Jersey, in Calvert, Texas area, in southern California desert and on the Yakima Indian Reservation in Central Washington State — Persons in these areas have reported (during UFO-ape-like entity appearance periods) what sounds like generators or some sort of machinery. Sometimes the noise is described as like a truck climbing a hill. It seems to originate from all directions but it is loudest when the ear is

placed to the ground.

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Worley, by the way, calls the "Bigfoot-like" creatures "para-apes" and "para-entities."

"Many para-apes are black and no different than western Bigfoot, Sasquatch, or whatever," Worley notes.

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Two other men who have spent many years investigating this paranormal aspect of Bigfoot are Erik Beckjord and Jack Lapseritis. While each is controversial in his own way, I feel each has much to offer in the Bigfoot story, especially the Bigfoot-UFO linkage and the "para-apes" of Don Worley.

While it was Worley who reminded me of Lapseritis, I'd heard of the professional psychic a few years back when he resided at Roseburg, Ore. In 1989, he was a participant at the ISC-sponsored Bigfoot conference at Washington State University.

Beckjord resides at Malibu, Calif., where he currently is planning a new "UFO-Bigfoot" museum, to be located in Los Angeles or Santa Barbara, he said.

Lapseritis is an anthropologist and social scientist who became immersed in the Bigfoot-UFO connection through the hobby of dowsing, or "water witching."

A Walla Walla friend of mine says Lapseritis offered to come to Walla Walla and "dowse" a Bigfoot's location by using a dowsing rod on a topographical map of the Blue Mountains.

Jack Lapseritis, B.A., M.S., now makes his home in Tucson, Arizona. This year marked two

major events for him. He celebrated his 48th birthday and in nearly the same time frame entered the married state. A lengthy phone conversation in September brought me up to speed on this man who many think stands on the threshold of the UFO-Bigfoot connection.

Lapseritis for the past 35 years has been studying this most controversial enigmas. His investigations into the Bigfoot matter has led him into wilderness areas around the entire globe!

A full-time professional with academic credentials, he models his investigations after the Jane Goodall traditions where a trained, unarmed observer lives quietly in the forest for a period of months so he can interact with the creatures.

Lapseritis does not feel a specimen of a Bigfoot (dead or alive) will ever happen. He says his own experiences have convinced him that the phenomenon is not just physical, but parapsychical. He further notes that those who have seen Bigfoot share many common elements with the experiences of those who have had contact with UFOs.

At first, for several years, Lapseritis refused to accept the paranormal implications of Bigfoot or Bigfoot and UFOs. His first-hand experiences have since convinced him otherwise. He has documented many, many cases from ordinary people who claim to have had similar experiences, too.

Lapseritis, incidentally, has some important observations about the famous film Roger Patterson shot of a Bigfoot in 1967. Lapseritis gives refutation of the "someone in a monkey suit" dismissal by "experts" who viewed the film at the Smithsonian



Institution. "When Russian scientists later examined the same film, frame-by-frame, for over two hundred frames, they reported that their anatomist and bio-mechanics expert said that it was a real creature. They concluded that no person could walk in that particular manner. "It is, I think, an important distinction that the scientists who dismissed the film as a fraud had never seen a Sasquatch, and, therefore, are not authorities on the subject themselves. Instead of analyzing the film with a bio-mechanic and anatomist, they simply dismissed the evidence as too fantastic to be taken seriously."

Lapseritis claims to have seen a Bigfoot on several occasions (and his wife and stepson have experienced the Bigfoot, too).

"So, from personal experience, I can say that Bigfoot is real," he notes. "But, I would also point out that in the past 30 years, despite 200 or 300 Bigfoot researchers, armed with everything from dogs, planes, traps, guns, computers, electronic equipment, and even helicopters, not one creature has ever been captured or killed.

"The anthropoid's ability to remain elusive is, I believe, the key to understanding the phenomenon.

"I also believe that that elusiveness has a parallel in the interdimensional aspect of the UFO phenomenon."

Lapseritis tells of the highly interesting response he got from a Bigfoot during one of his encounters.

"When I asked if they (Bigfoots) were the 'missing link,' they laughed and said, 'No, you people are the missing link. You don't know where you're

from or where you're going.' "

During his decade and more of contacts with Bigfoots, Lapseritis claims to have had more than 300 Bigfoot experiences, including some with multiple witnesses or at least one other witness besides himself.

"The future is now," he says, and these happenings are being reported by hundreds of people who probably represent one percent of those who have had these strange encounters."

Lapseritis, in lectures and in writings, says he feels science should be trying different approaches.

"In my opinion," he says, "now is the time for interested psychologists to collaborate with other scientists to explore the reports and implications of the psychic-Sasquatch and UFO encounters. "Perhaps some day we shall come to a better understanding of the significance of these phenomena for our stewardship of the planet and our evolutionary development.

"Perhaps the Bigfoot and UFO encounters are helping us to learn about our new age tasks."

During our recent telephone conversation, I mentioned the August 20, 1992, experience of Paul Freeman, as he captured on video film a pair of Bigfoots in the Blue Mountains. Lapseritis related to that.

"I tried (in his first years of research) using a camera until I realized that they didn't want me to do that, so I just respected that and in respecting them, they started coming to me in other ways." I told Lapseritis that Freeman that day figured that the two Bigfoots who were acting in a very

threatening way toward him, as he filmed them, felt he was pointing a gun at them.

"Oh, they know guns and cameras," Lapseritis responded. "They are a people. I don't care what Krantz or anyone says. I've had several hundred experiences in the last 13 years — not the kind they can sink their teeth into — and I don't lay up a corpse for them (Krantz, et al) and I wouldn't want to. I've learned who the Bigfoots are from another perspective.

"And, Paul (Freeman) may start having experiences like me. If he does, because he's not frightening them and he's relaxed, they'll start coming to him in a different way. But, Krantz will never have an experience. He's too aggressive — he'll get himself killed being that way ... "

All of this and much, much more, is promised in a book Lapseritis told me he is preparing for the printer and due out in June, 1993.

The title is not sure yet, he says, but presently it is "The Psychic Sasquatch: A UFO Connection."

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Jon Erik Beckjord needs no introduction to this saga of the "Bigfoot of the Blues." He was on the scene at once when Freeman reported seeing the creature in June, 1982.

Beckjord got some Associated Press coverage when he was quoted in a June 14, 1982, release that he thought Freeman's Bigfoot could be "a robot from outer space." Beckjord at the time was director of Project Bigfoot, based in Seattle. He subsequently moved to Malibu where he for a time operated a Bigfoot museum. It has now closed and

a new one is in the offing, he says.

Of the 1982 sighting in the Blues, though, Beckjord's statement about the Bigfoot remains very firmly his belief today, he told me in September, 1992.

"It might be something really weird, such as an alien," Beckjord said in 1982. Like a lot of others, Beckjord got hooked on the Bigfoot thing. His "hooking" began in 1975 while filming a documentary on the creature in the Northwest. He soon had progressed to his para-normal beliefs about the Bigfoot/Sasquatch/Para-ape.

He told me of an incident in 1977 when he found tracks in the snow near Puyallup, Wash. The big tracks came from a bush, meandered across a field "then just stopped, and not a tree within 60 feet," he says. "Other people have (over the years) reported the same sort of thing," Beckjord said. "And, regular Bigfoot hunters like Rene Dahinden don't like that ... it's too spooky ... but the thing (in Puyallup) either was beamed up (to a UFO?) or just plain de-materialized!"

Beckjord recalled his visit to Walla Walla in 1982 and then the later tracks (found a week later) being termed hoaxes by a professional tracker hired by the Forest Service.

"That guy said the tracks were faked because they stayed the same distance apart, whether going up hill or down," Beckjord said. "Well, back in 1981, I led a party into the Sierras and we found 16-inch tracks going up a logging p73 slide road. Every time they came to a rain stop across the slide, the tracks just kept going, the same distance

apart, over the rainstop and all, it didn't matter, just like the earth's gravity had no pull on the Bigfoot. Like a man walking on the moon.

"So, those tracks at Elk Wallow (in the Blue Mountains in '82) could go the same length throughout and be made by an alien Bigfoot which would not have to change stride distance."

Beckjord also said "people have been looking for a dead Bigfoot and wondering why none are ever found ... they probably just disintegrate."

Which, of course, bears out the statements of "exploding" Bigfoots, etc., mentioned earlier in this chapter.

Beckjord decries the "customary" searching for Bigfoot.

"People can't think beyond flesh and blood," he says. "They're not able to think in an advanced way. If they see a footprint, they feel there has to be something there."

And Beckjord, like so many others who have delved into the paranormal on this thing, says "it just ain't necessarily so!"

Beckjord also says he feels the Bigfoot hunters with the most reknown "have always been conservative on Bigfoot from the start and are just staying that way."

This long-time Bigfoot researcher also had a forthright statement about the Bigfoot film shot in 1967 by Roger Patterson. "He never put his name or copyright notice on it and once it got shown around by people that put it into the public domain, according to the patent attorneys I've talked to," Beckjord says. "And, registering the film

later does not change that, they further told me."

On that famous film, taken near Willow Creek, Calif., by Patterson, accompanied by Bob Gimlin, Beckjord says:

"I have suggested before that Bigfoot creatures may be lost alien pets. Perhaps they are also simply the aliens themselves, able to transfer from one form to another. One piece of evidence I have of this are two frames from the Patterson-Gimlin film that show a strange, cylinder object attached in one case behind an arm, and in another case, behind a thigh. It is an object that does not belong attached to a natural animal or a natural humanoid."

Beckjord feels that it is this which points up the possibility of the physical search for Bigfoots being a fruitless exercise. What he had to say in issue number 83 of "Pursuit" Magazine puts the cap on this:

"In Loren Coleman's 'Mysterious America,' Ivan Sanderson is quoted two years before his death as being in a quandary over whether or not to let the 'paraphysical stuff' come out in cryptozoology. Being a zoologist, he was stuck on the horns of a dilemma. Sadly, death solved this problem for him. He was concerned that the media would make fools of us all, and wondered if it was honest to try to sweep all the paraphysical stuff (anomalies) under the rug. I now think we might as well come out with it — Bigfoot, Nessie, phantom panthers, Big Bird, etc., etc., are not zoological, and we ought to quit pretending they are. "Hanging on to this myth is making real fools of us.

"What we really need to do now is to advance boldly a step upward ... and start saying to the media, and in articles, that the creatures of cryptozoology are more likely to be actual aliens of some undetermined kind, than normal animals.

"The overall evidence indicates this: blood anomalies recently uncovered, extreme abnormal weights for Bigfoot, rock-still Yetis, sudden-start and sudden-stop tracks (i.e., tracks from/to nowhere) and Bigfoot entities that become balls of light (Ball Lightning?) when either shot at or photographed. The list is endless.

"Since it is now silly to talk of biological beasts when they aren't, we might as well be bold and talk about aliens, from outer space, inner space, or parallel worlds and the evidence for them.

" 'Credibility' has not gotten us a dead Nessie nor a dead Bigfoot to examine."

## CHAPTER 15

Here's some reading and other reference material about the subject in which you have been so involved in reading of "Bigfoot of the Blues."

Probably the most thorough of all is the early book (1960) by the late Ivan Sanderson, for long the main guru on the subject. Title of his book is "Abominable Snowmen, Legend Come to Life." In this hefty (524 pages) tome Sanderson drew from "records and reports that are world-wide in scope and cover a broad period of time. He discusses all

views...ranging from highly plausible accounts to reports that border on the absurd. The result is as thorough an evaluation of all known sightings as could possibly be compiled at this time."

Dr. Grover Krantz, WSU anthropologist, has co-authored some books on the subject to which he has devoted many years of his career. I'd recommend "The Sasquatch and Other Unknown Hominoids," by Krantz and Vladimir Markotic, and "The Scientist Looks at the Sasquatch," by Krantz and Roderick Sprague, University of Idaho anthropologist. A new book by Krantz was reportedly forthcoming in fall of 1992.

A husband-wife writing-research team has collaborated on two books: "The Evidence for Bigfoot and Other Man-like Beasts" and "Bigfoot Casebook," a compilation of thousands of sightings of the creature. Janet and Colin Bord are the authors.

Of course, one of the early ones writing on the subject was John Green of British Columbia. Green has collected more than a thousand casts of footprints and has authored more than one book about Sasquatch. I think you'll find his "On the Track of the Sasquatch" highly interesting and entertaining ... and enlightening.

A further listing includes: "Sasquatch," by Don Hunter and Rene Dahinden.

"Manlike Monsters on Trial," by several researchers, published by the University of British Columbia Press.

"Bigfoot," by John Napier.

"Sasquatch Apparitions," by Barbara Wasson.



"The Mysterious Monsters," by Robert and Frances Guenette.

"The Abominable Snowmen," by Eric Norman.

"The Search for Bigfoot ... Monster, Myth or Man?" by Peter Byrne.

The April-June issue of "Bigfoot Co-op" carried an excellent review of several Bigfoot videos, touted as an excellent teaching aid. Robert E. Bartholomew provided the evaluations for the Co-op. I am citing the following from the Co-op's offering of April-June, 1992:

— The Legend of Boggy Creek, 1972 (87 min. Pierce-Ledwell). This excellent phenomenological perspective on Bigfoot sightings in the vicinity of Fouke, Arkansas, "from the native's point of view," includes a series of interviews and re-creations (usually with original witnesses) of local "encounters." Despite a low budget and imperfect cinematography, this film has homey charm, and is at times gripping in its realism. It documents how a small community can periodically become overwhelmed with rumors and reports, and should dispel the notion that witnesses are often deviant or crazy. Unfortunately, the film lacks a wider ethnology of period sightings influxes. It should not be confused with "Return to Boggy Creek," (1977) a fictional sequel.

— Monsters! Mysteries or Myths? 1974 (52 min. Smithsonian Institution). This television special narrated by Rob Serling, judiciously weighs evidence for and against Bigfoot, the Abominable Snowman, and the Loch Ness Monster, providing detailed analyses of the 1967 Patterson and the

1969 Marx films. This comprehensive overview is lucid and concise. The Loch Ness segment can be easily edited for non-topicality.

— The Legend of Bigfoot, 1975 (80 min. Palladium). This is an uncritical, highly speculative, autobiographical docudrama of Ivan Marx' numerous "encounters" including an extensive presentation of his purported films of the creature. Its length and narrow subject treatment preclude it from more than marginal use.

— Bigfoot: The Mysterious Monster, 1975 (80 min. Shick Sun Classic). This comprehensive, thought-provoking documentary provides a worldwide perspective, and is interspersed with re-enactments. Superbly narrated by Peter Graves, the evidence for Bigfoot is scrutinized as in a court case through interviews with scientists, including many anthropologists. Evidence is examined on many levels (footprints, hair, feces, vocalizations, eye-witness accounts, hypnosis, polygraphs, motion picture, psychic mediums). The famous Allan Berry incident is inaccurately re-enacted, and the infamous Minnesota "Iceman" is scandalously implied to be a genuine Bigfoot. Except for those shortcomings, this film is carefully researched.

— In Search of ... This Television series, narrated by Leonard Nimoy, has made four Bigfoot programs, each providing a concise introduction to different aspects of the mystery. Produced by Alan Landsburg, each segment is about 22 minutes long, well-suited for classroom presentation since they can be shown individually or in combination.

"Bigfoot" (1977) overviews North American Sasquatch reports, showing interviews with Dr. Grover Krantz and researcher Peter Byrne who debate ethics versus pragmatism in killing a specimen to prove its existence. "The Monster Hunters" (1978) examines the life of Loch Ness investigator Tim Dinsdale, and follows the activities of the Bay Area Group which conducts periodic Bigfoot expeditions in the Pacific Northwest. The video contains footage of the 1978 International Bigfoot Conference at the University of British Columbia, and interviews skeptic zoologist Dr. William Montagna. "Swamp Monsters" (1979) discusses the persistent "monster" sightings on Honey Island, a remote 27,000-acre Mississippi River delta bayou in Louisiana. The video presents speculation on how such a creature could survive (e.g. diet, hunting habits), interviewing researcher Holland Ford and naturalist George Stevens. "The Abominable Snowman" (1979) is an historical examination of the large, hairy, bipedal hominids reputed to inhabit the Himalayas, interviewing Everest climbers who claim to have observed the Yeti, seen its tracks, or heard its vocalizations.

— In the Shadow of Bigfoot, 1982, (85 min. Amazing Horizons). This documentary features extensive footage of the dubious Ivan Marx film. Researchers travel to various "hot spots" across the U.S., revisiting famous sighting locations and interviewing locals. The film is uncritical, and some of the evidence is deliberately altered to enhance credibility. However, because it includes coherent interviews with the late anthropologist,

Dr. Warren Cook, the film is marginally useful. Cook discusses why he believes the controversial Marx films are genuine, and later, why *Australopithecus boisei* is the best candidate for contemporary Sasquatch sightings. The film includes a brief interview with Dr. Gary Levine, who believes Bigfoot to be a psychic manifestation.

— *Secrets and Mysteries*, 1982 (22 min.). The Bigfoot segment from this television series contains in depth interviews with researchers Peter Byrne, John Green and Dr. Grover Krantz, focusing on whether Bigfoots need to be shot to be proven.

— *Adventure: Search for the Yeti*, (1988) (60 min. BBC Bristol). This is the best documentary on the subject to date, tailor-made for anthropologists, and teeming with ethnographic detail. This intelligent, inspiring, culturally sensitive examination of the Abominable Snowman legend follows mountaineer Chris Bonington's three-month trek through restricted sections of the Tibetan Himalayas. The film looks at the impact of the Yeti on the local culture, and provides scores of interviews with indigenous inhabitants and Western witnesses.

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Another video documentary and some more books were listed in the August, 1992, issue of "Bigfoot Co-op." Here they are:

*Mysterious World*, Arthur C. Clarke, late 1970s/early 1980s (22 min.). This is an outstanding documentary which features interviews with Dr. Grover Krantz on shooting a specimen for scientific scrutiny, Bob Gimlin on the Patterson film, and

Policeman Kenny Cooper's seldom heard (Bigfoot) vocalization recording. Arthur C. Clarke nicely summarized the scientific attitude when he concluded: "If anyone gave me \$100 to bet on it I'd put \$40 on the Yeti, \$10 on Bigfoot and I'd keep the \$50 for myself."

And, here are some new publications:

"Monsters of the Northwoods," by Bartholomew, Bartholomew, Brann and Hallenbeck, published by North Country Books, Inc. (18 Irving Place, Utica NY 13501), 140 pp. \$13.95 by mail (William Brann, 2 Mountain View Dr., Hudson Falls NY 12839. The majority of the sightings are from Washington County, New York, in the vicinity of Kinderhook, south of Albany, and Turland County, Vermont. It ends with a capsule chronological summary of all known Bigfoot cases in New York and Vermont.

"Wonders: Seeking the Truth in a Universe of Mysteries," a quarterly by Mark A. Hall (9215 Nicollet So., 104, Bloomington MN 55420). Vol. 1, No. 2 June 1992, is now available (\$3 per single issue or \$11 for four copies>) The feature article is "True Giants, or Gigantopithecus is Alive and Taller Than You Think." This journal also previews books and magazines of interest to cryptozoologists including two by Mark Hall himself. Also, check these: "Thunderbirds, the Living Legend of Giant Birds" (104 pp) and "Natural Mysteries: Monster Lizards, English Dragons, and Other Puzzling Animals," (102 pp) at \$16.95 each.

"The Choppers — And the Choppers: Mysterious Helicopters and Animal Mutilations", has been

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revised and updated from its original 1980 edition by Thomas Adams and is available from Project Stigma, Box 1094, Paris, Texas 75461.



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# **Bigfoot of the Blues**